

Thomas. Cortez.

F

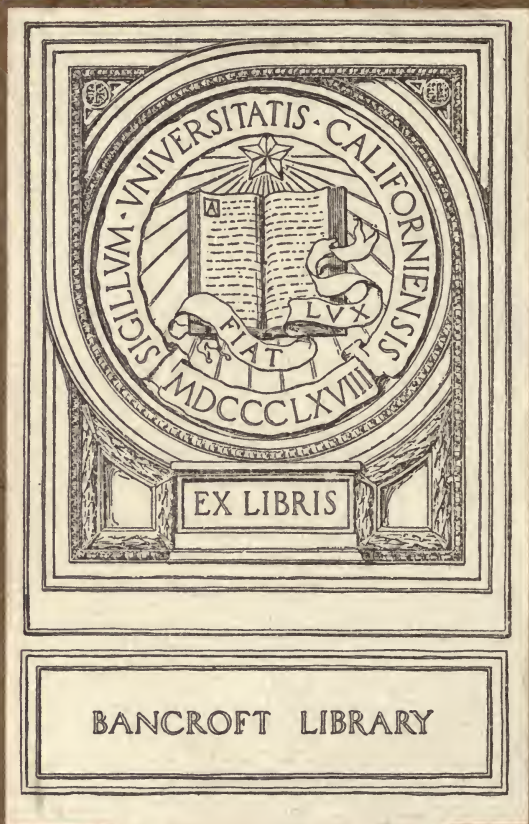
1210

.2

.T 34

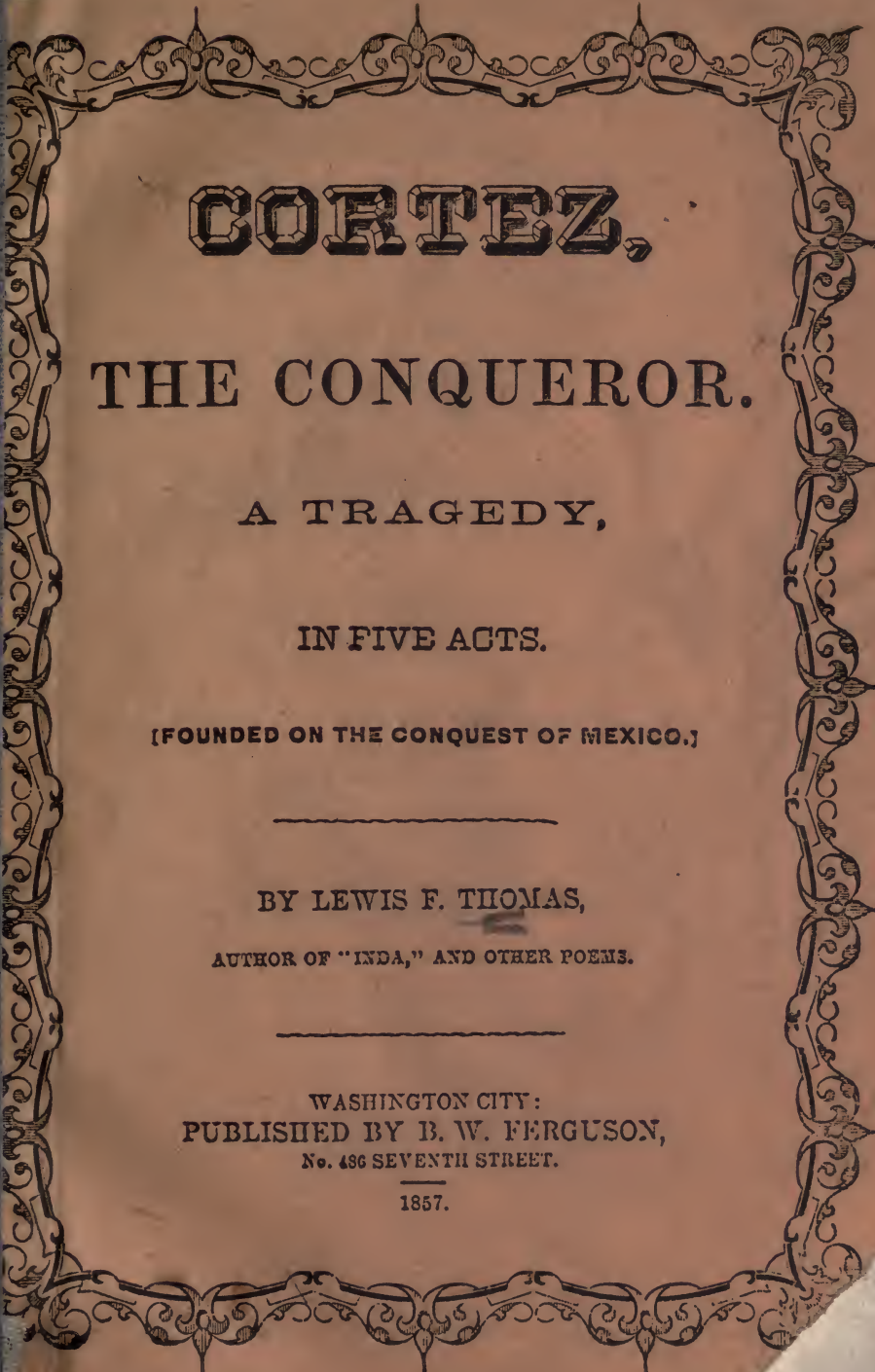
X

F 1210 .2 .T 34 X



BANCROFT LIBRARY

376 10370



CORTEZ,

THE CONQUEROR.

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

[FOUNDED ON THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO.]

BY LEWIS F. THOMAS,

AUTHOR OF "INDA," AND OTHER POEMS.

WASHINGTON CITY:
PUBLISHED BY B. W. FERGUSON,
No. 436 SEVENTH STREET.

1857.

The Bancroft Library

No. 10376.

CORTEZ

THE CONQUEROR.

A TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS,

[FOUNDED ON THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO,]

BY LEWIS F. THOMAS,

Author of "Inda and other Poems."

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
PUBLISHED BY B. W. FERGUSON,
No. 486 SEVENTH STREET.

.....
1857.

F1210

.2

.T34

X

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1857, by LEWIS
F. THOMAS, in the clerk's office of the district court of the United States
for the District of Columbia.

DEDICATION.

TO

GEN. JOHN A. QUITMAN,
OF MISSISSIPPI.

MY DEAR SIR:

During the late war between our country and Mexico, Fame loudly echoed your name as one of the most gallant among your compatriots in arms. An intimate acquaintance with some of your officers, afforded to me ample testimony that your high chivalry in the conflict was only surpassed by your humanity and urbanity when the conflict was over. In your present capacity as a representative in Congress, I have had frequent occasion to note your integrity as a man, and your sagacity, ability, and patriotism as a statesman. My personal acquaintance with you leads me to admire the unaffected gentleman and unobtrusive scholar. As a slight token of my high consideration and regard I respectfully inscribe to you this Tragedy, *Cortez the Conqueror*, founded on events of old occurrence on the same fields where you so lately and so largely contributed to render the name of our country and your own, illustrious.

Very truly, your friend

and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

JANUARY, 1857.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Theatrical managers or actors desiring to perform this tragedy can address their proposals to the author at Washington, D. C. The two first acts of "Cortez the Conqueror" were submitted to the great tragedian, the late J. B. BOOTH, from whom they received the highest encomiums, and who intended to produce the tragedy, had he lived. The *whole* has been perused by his son, Mr. EDWIN BOOTH, (on whom the mantle of his father has fallen,) and who concurs in the high opinions expressed by his parent and prototype. It has also been eulogized by other distinguished authorities in the histrionic art, and by gentlemen of high literary ability and critical taste. "Cortez," &c., has also been prepared as a Dramatic Equestrian Spectacle.

P R E F A C E.

THE HISTORY of the conquest of Mexico, by the Spaniards, affords ample material for more than a score of tragedies, and has exercised the pens of more than a dozen historians. In working up the subject for my tragedy, I have kept in view many of the most remarkable and prominent events, as detailed by CLAVIGERO, BERNAL DIAZ, (one of the conquerors,) and PRESCOTT. I have endeavored to delineate my historical characters after the portraiture of those writers, and to speak for each of my *dramatis personæ*, in the style and language which might naturally be supposed to pertain to the character, circumstances and condition of each, whether real or imaginary. How far I have succeeded in these particulars, and in the work generally, are matters for the judgment of critics. Of course, from the circumscribed limits of my work, very many incidents of most startling effect, scenes of cruelty and horror, of chivalry and romance, and of self-devoting heroism, have necessarily been omitted altogether; and some that could not be given in detail, are barely alluded to. I have, however, pursued the general outline of the conquest in its chronological order, with but few anachronisms and poetic licences, so that, I think, the reader, or an audience, can readily follow the histrionic characters with a tolerable idea of the idiosyncrasy of each, and a fair understanding of the events in which all really participated, or are supposed to have acted. The character of Cortez, and the incidents in which he is made to figure, are almost entirely drawn from history. He set out from Havana in the year 1519, with 11 vessels and 619 men and 13 horses, on his expedition against Mexico. He was then 33 years of age. When quite a youth, he had an amour with a lady who was confined in a convent in Salamanca, and in leaping the convent wall, he broke his leg. The accident delayed his departure for the New World for about a year. From this incident, it was

easy for the imagination to connect him with Maria de Estrada and the page, her son, (the first a real, and the latter an imaginary character,) as I have done in the lower plot of the play. Marina, the first Christian convert on this continent, relates her own history to Cortez, precisely as it occurred. She was interpreter to Cortez, his faithful friend and constant companion, and saved him and his troops in the manner related in the text, and on several other occasions. As to Montezuma, his imprisonment and manner of his death are entirely historical. The rise of the waters, the appearance of a comet, the eclipse of the sun, the prophesies of his sister, all which he alludes to in one of his speeches, are occurrences that actually took place about the time of the appearance of the Spaniards, and were believed by the Mexicans to be the certain prognostics of their downfall. The circumstance attending a sacrifice and the burning of the temple, as related by the High Priest, occurred at the same period, and were likewise deemed ominous of ruin. Hassan was the name of a Moor, a slave to Cortez, who accompanied him in his expedition. Mexicatzin, the Tlascalan chief, was one of his first allies. Olid, Lugo, Sandoval and Alvarado were all young men, captains and companions of Cortez—adventurers, such as those now with Walker in Central America. Olmedo was a priest and chaplain of the expedition, and gave timely warning to Cortez of the design of Velasquez to arrest it in the manner stated. Thus the characters and the leading incidents pertaining to the conquest, which form the *upper* plot of the tragedy, are all real and historical. Some of the situations and the language of the speakers only, are imaginary. In the *under* plot I have drawn entirely on my imagination.

Some persons may at first be disposed, hypercritically, to cavil at the seeming incongruities of the opening soliloquies of Olid, in contemplation of suicide, but, I think, on reflection they will be willing to admit that no man (or no madman or fool even) ever came to the determination of becoming *felo de se*, without having “justified the deed unto himself,” by most incongruous arguments. I have ante-dated the treason and death of Olid, and have given him a more honorable end than he really met; for he was, in fact, beheaded at Honduras for leading a revolt against the authority of Cor-

tez, in favor of the adherents of Velasquez. I have also, in the under plot, assigned, besides ambition, another possible cause for his treason, or incentive to it; but in so doing, I have done no violence to his true character, or to that of any other connected with him in the tragedy. Indeed, it would be difficult to exaggerate the vicious characters of most of the conquerors; for there are but few crimes in the catalogue of human infamy of which they were not guilty. It would be equally difficult to extol their endurance, fortitude and heroism. Their characters and their exploits are anomalous; they and their deeds are without parallels in history.

When I wrote a portion of the following pages, I had not the slightest design of perpetrating a tragedy. The first part composed, was the first soliloquy of Olid; which was written in my boyhood, and entitled "A Suicide's reflections on Death." The next was Maria's speech to Olmedo, which was occasioned about the same period, by my hearing a lewd woman abuse a priest. In after years I read the History of Mexico, while convalescing from sickness; and during the time, in looking over some scraps of manuscript, I came across the soliloquy, and formed the idea of attempting a tragedy: but I had no definite plot. My first conception was to produce something on the conquest of Texas. On the return of health I threw aside the little I had written. Being however, through a series of years, from time to time, an invalid, I was, when so, in the habit of resorting to books and my pen to relieve the tedium of a sick chamber; and on such occasions "Cortez the Conqueror" has been mostly produced. After the *first* act was written, I lost, while travelling, my trunk containing it, and did not recover it for four or five years. On re-perusing my recovered manuscript, the old idea of tragedy writing occurred to me, and I wrote the *last* scene of the *last* act, and also produced the *second* act, while in sickness, at a very few sittings; but on the restoration of health my work was again laid aside. Some seven years ago, something occurred which induced me to show what I had written (two acts) to the great tragedian, Mr. Booth, (then living;) and the high encomiums bestowed upon my commencement, by him, and by other friends whose opinions I valued, induced me to resume my work, whenever

indisposition confined me to my chamber ; an occurrence sufficiently frequent and long, to enable me to present my production in its present shape. It has beguiled some hours of illness, which but for it, would have been dreary indeed to me ; and if the reading or representation of it should serve to amuse or instruct others, I shall feel well assured that it has *not* been " writ in vain."

THE AUTHOR.

PROLOGUE.

BY "MUDIL BRAIG."

Too long our authors, ever prone to roam,
Neglect the stores of mental wealth at home;
Too long, by narrow critics lashed to awe,
Our people bend before a foreign law;
Talent, like wine, is valued by the brand,
And importation makes the subject grand.
Ah! false to fame, the country and the age,
Is that o'erlabored and o'erlearned page,
Which scorns the present with its impulse free,
And knows no merit save antiquity!
Far different is the scene ye view to-day—
A native author brings a native play;
Through fields uncultured, through untrodden bowers,
He comes the *first* to pluck the choicest flowers,
He tells a tale of that most wondrous time,
When young adventure rose to deeds sublime—
When the weak old sank down beneath the new,
And empires yielded to the hardy few.
And those stern heroes live and breath again,
Whose daring made them more or less than men.
If aught of glory on his page is shown,
Be proud, America! 'tis all thine own!
And, now, kind friends, your prologue bids adieu,
Leaving the rest to candor and to you.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

— 0 —

SPANIARDS,

FERNANDO CORTEZ, *called by the
Mexicans, MA-LA-CHE.*

CHRISTOVAL DE OLID, PEDRO DE ALVARADO, FRANCISCO DE LUGO, GONZALEZ DE SANDOVAL	} <i>His Captains.</i>
---	----------------------------

ANTONIO DE OJEDA, *Page to Cortez.**

BARTHOLOMEW DE OLMEDO, *Priest
and Chaplain.*

HASSAN, *a Moor, Slave to Cortez.*

JUAN DE ESTRADA, *a Soldier.**

MARIA DE ESTRADA, *his Wife.*

Soldiers, &c., &c.

MEXICANS.

MONTEZUMA, *Emperor.*

HIGH PRIEST.

LORD TEUTILE, *an Ambassador.*

Two Gladiators.

Messengers, &c., &c.

NINNAH, *daughter to Montezuma.*

Females attending on Ninnah.

MEXICATZIN, *Chief of the Tlascalans,
and ally of Cortez.*

MARINA, *Slave to Cortez, his Interpreter,
and the first Christian Convert on the American Continent.*

The characters marked thus (*) are imaginary—all the others are historical.

All the SCENES of the First Act are in and about HAVANA—the rest are at VERA CRUZ, on the road to, and in the city of MEXICO.

It is expected that many lines, especially in the first act, will be omitted in the representation. That is, however, a matter of taste or expediency, with manager or actor. For costume, scenery, paraphernalia, &c., see end of the volume.

CORTEZ, THE CONQUEROR.

ACT I.—SCENE FIRST.

SCENE.—*A Room in the House of ESTRADA, in the suburbs of Havana.*—ESTRADA and his Wife, MARIA.

Maria. I tell thee now, Juan de Astrada,
If thou art backward in this enterprize,
Thou'rt no true Spaniard, and I never more
Will call thee husband. Out upon thee, man,
Thou hast a better chance of service here
Than ever to thy father's lot befell
When he was squire to Medina Celi,
And followed him against the barbarous Moors;
Yet he gained honor! and here hast thou now
Offers of honor and great wealth to boot
In gallant Cortez's service; and forsooth,
Thy laggard spirit bids thee stay at home,
When thou should'st gird thy armor for the wars.
Why, e'en Ojeda, that unbearded youth,
Whose fragile arm can scarce a buckler bear,
Is eager to be rank'd in Cortez's band.

Estrada. Well, dame Maria, I have seen so much
Of war among these heathen Indians,
That I am weary of it; and I long
To live in peace. The golden promises
This General gives, will never be repaid,
Save with requirements of hardest toil,
And evil usage for good service done.

Maria. And dost thou doubt the noble Cortez's word ?
And thou, a soldier, call war's service toil,
Which is but pastime to a gallant man ?

Estrada. I doubt not Cortez, but I doubt this scheme,
And doubt the right to slay men for their gold.
In my life's morning, the array of war
To me was a most pleasing pageantry,
And 'twas my sport to rush into the strife,
And never question if the cause were just,
So it were sanctioned by my king's command ;
And then I deem'd a vict'ry cheaply won,
However dear the carnage that it cost.
But now, the noontime of my day has come,
And, like the weary reaper, I would fain
Pass my meridian in shady rest,
And con the profits of my harvest o'er ;
And when life's eventide is closing in,
I would look back, upon some hours at least,
That mark'd my day not all in evil spent,
And show'd I sometimes had remember'd Heaven.

Maria. Some priest has addled that soft pate of thine !
Frighted thy fancy with a tale of Hell ;
Subdued thy spirit to his purposes,
By o'ermuch penance and anathemas
Unmann'd thee, and made a dotard of thee.

Estrada. I wish to quit this butcher trade of war,
And live in quiet in a rural home.

Maria. Wouldst thou become a slave to till the soil ?
Wouldst thou thy soldier-'prenticeship disgrace ?
And change the honorable field of arms
For servile tasks in fields of husbandry,
Beshrew me ! but, methinks a shepherd's crook,
Would more befit thee than a warrior's lance—
A sickle better suit thee than a sword.
I took thee for a soldier, brave and true ;
My father's daughter ne'er had wed thee else.
Here comes Antonio, thy foster-son ;
His daring courage and his manly port
Do put thy older soldiership to shame.

[*Enter Antonio de Ojeda.*

Welcome, Antonio ; how hast thou sped ?
How came thy errand off ?

Antonio.

O, excellent !

From conference with Cortez straight I've come,
And, my kind foster-parents, give me joy !
He doth accept my service as his page.

Maria. Indeed ! Forsooth, thy tidings are most glad.
What means hast thou wherewith to back thy suit ?

Antonio. None, save a simple story simply told,
Truth needs no aid in telling, for it speaks
With native eloquence that moves men's hearts,
When all the arts of oratory fail.

Maria. How didst thou gain admittance to the chief,
Unfriended and alone ?

Antonio. I had a friend.
When I went hence I met the General's slave,
Hassan, the Moor, to whom I told my wish,
And soon he gave me conduct to the chief,
Who sat alone, poring o'er maps and charts
And inky parchments ; which his flashing eyes
Seem'd to light up as he bent o'er to read.

Maria. Well, tell us now what pass'd 'twixt him and thee ?

Antonio. He scann'd me with quick glances for a while,
Then ask'd my errand, and I told him thus :
" May't please you, sir, I am an orphan youth ;
Antonio de Ojeda is my name ;
But of my parentage I nothing know,
'Though nothing of a parent's care have lack'd ;
For, since the youngest date my mem'ry keeps,
I have received all kindness and all care
From Juan de Estrada and his wife.
Hither, from Salamanca, in their charge
I came ; and now, at her behest, I seek
What may it please thee graciously to grant :
Befitting service, near unto myself,
And an appointment for me in the wars."
The while I spoke, his eyes were fixed on mine
With a most startling gaze.

Maria. Said he nothing ?

Antonio. No, not at first ; but from his seat he rose,
And paced the chamber hurriedly ; and then
Came where I stood, and gazed me in the face,
And dash'd his hand across his brow, and sigh'd,
And turn'd again, and strode unevenly ;
Circling the chamber round, till where I stood
Again he came, and then he took my hand,

And said I was a noble, gallant youth ;
And he smiled on me with a smile so sweet,
So very sweet ! O, it did make me wish
He were my father, to smile on me so.

Maria. What said he next ?

Antonio. Why, as he prest'd my hand,
He said, he in his service had no page,
And he bethought him that he needed one,
And I should serve him. Then he dropt my hand,
And threw himself into his seat again,
And closed his eyes, and bade me go away,
Equip myself, and come to him anon,
And thus dismissed me without further speech.

Maria, (aside.) So Cortez has some feeling, after all.

Antonio. Methinks the cares of his great enterprize
Weigh heavy on him.

Maria. Ay, no doubt they do.

Antonio. What ails thee, foster-father ? thou art dull ;
Is thy health failing ?

Estrada. Nay, I'm well enough ;
My dame and I were just now in debate
Touching this scheme against the Mexicans ;
For which, in sooth, I have but little heart,
Yet, since thou hast the Gen'ral's favor won,
I will prepare me for his service, too,
With what alacrity my spirit can,
To follow him where'er his fortune leads.

Antonio. Then let us quick get all in readiness ;
Thou art a vet'ran soldier, and I'll need
Thy aid and counsel to prepare myself
For the new station I am soon to fill,
And my kind mother, thou wilt aid me too ;
The city I will visit, for a while,
For some appointments, and soon meet you here.

Maria. Dispatch thy errand with what haste thou canst.

Antonio. I will be back right speedily. Adieu !

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE SECOND.

Time—Near Midnight.

SCENE—A Study.—*Books, Busts, Maps, &c.*—OLID (solus) dressed in the black habit of a student, with student's cap, and seated at a table, on which is a burning lamp, a Bible and a crucifix, a death's head and cross bones.—A clock of antique shape against the wall, with the index near the hour of twelve.—OLID holds a phial in his hand, and seems reading in the book, as curtain rises.

Olid. Yes, yes, 'tis destiny that wills it so.

This holy book ; nor this all holy sign,
Nor the wise heathen's¹ teachings of sad doubt,
No, nor the fear he fear'd, can stay my hand.
Why should I pause at short'ning my sad days,
Since life is a protracted death-struggle,
Where mortal courage in the end must fail ?
And death is but a quiet, dreamless sleep,
That knows no waking. [*Rises.*] Death, I'll drink
to thee.

This, [*holding up the phial,*] thy nepenthe for life's
teeming [ills.

This potent poison, soon shall give me peace.

[*Moves front.*

O! now, I do renounce thee, and thy train
Of wrongs, oppressions, cruelties and woes,
O, world ! thou Hydra still insatiate,
That hath a myriad vile tongues to curse,
As many venom'd fangs to gnaw and wound,
And Argus eyes, with multiplying sight
That magnify slight errors into crimes ;
And but one heart to harbor kindliness,
And that, alas ! too often thou giv'st up
To burning hate and uncontroll'd revenge.
Society ! I loathe thee, and the fools,
And fawning knaves, and cringing sycophants,
And heartless flatterers who gaily flit
On painted pinions, through the giddy throng
Of which thou art the being, aim and end.

O! I detest thee from my utmost soul,
And hate that world of which thou art a part,
By thee created, and creating thee.
I'll bide no longer in thy tainted sphere.
The grave! that narrow citadel, affords
A covert and a refuge from thy wrath.
I'll seek a home within its dark recess,
By virtue of that high prerogative
That nature gave to man; for well I deem
The greatest attribute of life is death,
To him whose only heritage is woe.
Within the immediate reach of all.
When the sick heart is weary of its pulse
It ministers an everlasting rest.
Death is the liberator of the world
Who breaks the bonds of servitude, and gives
The prison'd soul the liberty to roam
Unshackled on, through all eternity.
O, death! thou universal leveller;
Subject and king, master and slave alike,
Beast, bird and insect, vegetation, all
By thee are mingled into common dust.
O, happy thought! that the proud conqueror,
Whose puissant arm has vanquish'd empires,
At last is vanquish'd in his turn, by thee;
And the vain tyrant, whose power descends
A heritage, legitimate through blood—
Who, thron'd in majesty imperial,
With sway despotic, rules o'er half mankind,
Must yield his sceptre and his crown to thee.
Cæsar and Cæsar's slaves in thee are equals!
Thou friend to foes and enemy to friends
I hail thee! For, to me no hope appears,
With its bright beam, to light my rugged way
Through the dark vista of long years to come;
Thou wilt be welcome to my soul, enshrin'd
Within the gloomy mansion of her cares—
Anxious to burst her bondage and be free.
Come thou at midnight, like an eager friend
From a long journey; and I'll ope the door
To my sad heart, and thou shalt banquet there.

[Clock strikes twelve.

Man's mournful monitor now knells my doom;

It is my parting hour. Be calm, my soul !

O, friends and country, life and all, farewell !

[He raises the phial to his lips; loud knocks are heard at the door;—he starts.]

Who's there ? *[Thrusts the phial into his bosom.]*

Sandoval, [without]. Halloa, within ! Open the door.

Olid. Who are ye that ask entrance at this hour ?

Sandoval. Thy right true friends, Lugo and Sandoval.

Olid. *(Opens the door.)* In the name of friends I bid ye welcome.

[LUGO enters, followed by SANDOVAL. OLID embraces them alternately.]

Francisco de Lugo, come to my heart !

Come thou, too, Gonzalez de Sandoval.

Lugo. How goes the world with thee, good Christoval.

Olid. Alas ! alas ! indiff'rently indeed.

Sandoval. What ? thou the brave Christoval de Olid !

And dost thou answer in such solemn strain ?

Lugo. Why what a change is wrought in him forsooth :

He hath been conning works of mother church,

And reading lives of holy martyred saints,

Until his every thought is sicklied o'er

With churchyard fancies and a cloister's gloom.

What is't affects thee ? speak thy ailings out—

Give us thy griefs, and we will comfort give,

In fair requital for them.

Sandoval. Speak, Olid.

Olid. My griefs are e'en too many, my good friends,

To burden ye withal. A broken man,

Bankrupt alike in fortune and in hope,

I've no anticipations to digest,

And can ask nought save your kind sympathy,

And further must not your fair friendship tax :

For, to discharge my debts and mend my means

Would make the beggary of your estates.

I am besieged and sued for sums now due,

Enough to freight a caravel with gold :

And, sooth to say, I can no longer brook

The ceaseless cravings of my creditors.

Sandoval. 'Tis easy to make quittance with them all.

Olid. Nay, 'tis not so, the times are sadly changed.

Lugo. Say not the times, but say that thou art changed.

Av, sadly changed, from the gay cavalier,

Who in old Salamanca was my chum,
To a recluse, an anchorite, whose task
Is ever to tell o'er his beads and pray.

Olid. Would I were back again in Salamanca,
Where thou and I have seen such joyous days.

Lugo. I would thou wert a man, good Christoval,
A noble, such as thou wert wont to be.

Olid. What mean'st thou, Lugo, by thy taunting speech?
If thou hast aught to say, as friend or foe,
Speak it out freely, but keep back thy taunts.

Lugo. Weil, I will speak it freely, as a friend:
Why art thou, like a hermit, here immured,
Wasting thy time in search of bookish lore,
When, as a proud hidalgo, thou shouldst forth
With the new expedition now afoot,
And seek thy broken fortunes to amend,
And build anew the honors of thy house?

Olid. What expedition, Lugo dost thou mean?
I know of none.

Sandoval. What, hast not heard the news?

Olid. What news?

Sandoval. Why that the Governor Valasquez
Hath to Don Fernando Cortez given
A full commission, drawn in the king's name,
Making him generalissimo of a force,
To try the conquest of rich Mexico.
His fleet is momentarily expected here,
And Lugo and myself are well prepared
To join him in his glorious enterprise.

Olid. Indeed!

Lugo. What say'st thou—wilt thou go with us?

Olid. I'll think on't—to conquer Mexico?

Sandoval. Ay.

For, look ye, Olid, why shouldst thou or I,
Or any of us gallant cavaliers,
On whom Dame Fortune has been pleased to frown,
Linger inertly here our lives away,
In constant dread of duns and creditors;
Scorned by our friends, and scoffed at by our foes,
While Mexico, with golden promise now
Invites to its conquest, and holds out
Renown, and wealth, and beauty, to our hopes.
Why should we here grow old in poverty,

While glory, riches, pleasure wait us there.

Olid. It is a project fraught with chivalry.

Lugo. Then hasten to embark in it with us.

Olid. Could I assort my disarranged affairs,
I would go with ye, for, in truth, good friends,
I long have cherished in my inmost heart
The secret hope that I may one day raise
The name of my illustrious ancestors
As high again as when, in Palestine,
They spread the sacred banner of the cross,
And cheered their followers on to victory.
That hope has been the beacon of my soul,
And, though my father, in the wanton court
Of our late king, disbursed his princely means,
And, cut off in his prime, left me the heir
To a sad heritage of poverty,
Yet was that hope unto my waking dream
The palace-thought wherein they loved to dwell,
And it became so wedded to my heart,
That when reverses rudely tore it thence,
It left a void where dark Despair rushed in,
And 'twas but now I deemed myself so lost
That I renounced all fond expectancies,
And called on Death, as my sole comforter.

Lugo. Tut, man! pshaw! talk not of Death or dying.

The slave alone invokes Death as a friend;
The freeman over fortune triumphs ever,
No slave so mean as he who yields to fate,
No hero like to him who conquers it.

Sandoval. If on our expedition thou resolv'st,
Thou shalt have station fitting thy high birth,
And we will compass means to get thee off,
In spite of all the minions of the law.

Olid. Thanks, thanks; I'll go—your hands; believe me
friends,

It is as much for your good company,
As for the spirit of the daring scheme,
That I embark with you, for, without you,
The voyage were dull, companionship were nought,
And fame and fortune were but empty names,
Unless I earned and shared them both with you.

Lugo. I greet thy sudden resolution well—
Speedy resolves give birth to noble deeds,

Impulsive action always leads to fame,
And fortune follows on quick enterprize.

Sandoval. Behold ! the clock is past the hour of twelve ;
Much yet remains ere morning to be done,
And with the sun we must be up betimes,
When we will see thee, and, till then, farewell.

Lugo. Adieu ! may glory's brightest dreams be thine.

Olid. Farewell, my gallant friends, farewell, farewell.

[*LUGO and SANDOVAL exeunt through door. OLID dashes the phial away.*

(*Solus.*) Why, what a fool I was to think of death.

Fate plays the game into my very hands ;

Ambition and revenge both smile at once.

Fernando Cortez, my soul's cherished hate,

To be our general ?—I, his officer ?

'The wrong he did me feeding at my heart,

And growing there upon its aliment,

Usurping my heart's place till it became

Itself my heart—O I'll enact a part !

But nay—I must not think upon it now.

Rejoice ! my soul, hope smiles, I live again.

'The golden empire of the gorgeous west

Shall yield me a rich harvest of renown,

And wealth, to purchase my ancestral seats

In old Castile, and like a Cræsus there,

In regal splendor I will hold my court,

Dispensing favors with a lib'ral hand.

How tardily the time will lag away

Until our starting. Would that I could ride

The swift east wind, or on the lightning's flash

Could speed to compass my heart's formed desires.

O Fortune, Fortune ! deign to be my bride,

And, though I woo thee with a courtier's love,

I will reward thee with a hero's name. [*Exit.*

SCENE THIRD.

SCENE.—*A Street in Havana.*—*Enter* CORTEZ, SANDOVAL, and ALVARADO.

Cortez. And so, Gonzales, thou hast seen thy friend,

The valiant Olid, and he joins our league
Right willingly ?

San. He doth, Don Cortez.

Cortez. I do remember him ; some years ago,
In Salamanca, he was much noted
Among the reckless striplings of his time,
For having, with his boyish waywardness,
A deal of manly pride and chivalry,
And a high bearing, that gave prophesy
Of future grandeur.

San. He will no doubt keep
Up to the full, the promise of his youth.

Cortez. Bear to him this commission in my name,
And greet him, with expressions of my love,
As Captain Olid, for such rank he holds
In the king's service, until fitting time,
His merit shall with more promotion pay.
Advise him to dispatch, and say I long
To hold him in embrace of brotherhood.

San. Thy mission suits the wishes of my heart,
And in its execution 't will give joy—
I'll haste to do it.

[Exit.

Cortez. Now, Alvarado,
Our plans, like young buds germinating in the sun,
Ripen apace, and soon the harvest flowers,
Fresh gathered by the fairy hand of Fame,
Shall hero-chaplets form to grace our brows.

Alvarado. By Venus, were I back in Spain again,
With plenty of this Indian gold in store,
A harlequin might wear Fame's wreath for me.
I crave no chaplet save the rosy round
Formed by the lilly fingers of my fair.
Give me the wand Midas, give me gold,
And the luxurious Sybarites' sweet bed,
The goblet of bright Bacchus, and the wreath
Wove by some Ariadne of my love,
By me than Caesar's fillet more esteemed.
O! give me only these, and those who list
May court that common, jilting trull call'd Fame,
That, like a wanton and a vile coquette,
Plaits ye a promised garland here to-day,
That on the morrow decks a rival's brow.

Cortez. By my faith, thou art a philosopher,

A very Epicurus in discourse,
And yet a worse than heathen to deride
The goddess Fame so bitterly.

Alvarado. In sooth,
I hold that true philosophy is love,
And for my goddesses I'd take the maids,
The melting houris, with dark liquid eyes,
Still left within our country's paradise,
Where we've expelled the Moors—such deities
I yield my homage and my offerings to.

Cortez. Time was, I would have echoed back thy thought,
But now—hold! here comes the priest, Olmedo,
Our chaplain, and belike a cunning spy.—
I would the king would let the soldiers be,
Like old Knights Templars, knights and priests to boot.

[*Enter OLMEDO.—They bow to him.*]

Good morrow, father, to your reverence.

Olmedo. Peace and good morrow to ye, cavaliers,
But I, alack! am on a mission here,
Which, much I fear, bodes little peace to ye.

Cortez. Thy words portend bad tidings, father, speak!
And let us have the worst of them at once.

Olmedo. I have, by special messenger, received
From a Franciscan brother a short note,
Writ in great haste, and hither straight dispatched,
Wherein he speaks of matter touching thee
Right nearly: here, take it thyself and read.

[*Gives a letter to CORTEZ.*]

And let me hence, and may'st thou find the means
To circumvent the malice of thy foes.

[*Exit OLMEDO.*]

Cortez. Well now, in truth, I did the father wrong. [*Reads.*]
Ha! what's here? arrest me and stop our plans!
The damned double traitor!

Alvarado. Why, how now,
My noble friend, my gallant general,
What ails your Excellency?

Cortez, Look ye here!

Alvarado (reads). "Good brother Bartholomew, I do conjure thee, if thou hast any love for Don Fernando Cortez, give him instant warning that Governor Velasquez hath missles sent to Pedro Barbu, his lieutenant, with warrant for the General's arrest, and the present stoppage of the enterprize. I pray thee,

make good speed. This comes in great haste from thy brother in
St. Francis, JUAN DE MARA."

Why, what can all this mean?

Cortez.

What can it mean!

Why that Velasquez is a jealous fool,
A dolt, an idiot, a time-serving knave!
He stop the enterprize! now, by St. Paul!
He shall the current of my life's blood stop,
Rather than that—but 'tis no time for words—
Go, haste thee, Alvarado, call our friends;
Bid them all quickly meet me on the beach—
We will embark to-day. Let Barba try
To serve this petty tyrant's warrant out,
And, by my conscience, his foul gorgon head
I'll fix upon my gallant vessel's prow,
To fright the dolphins from her foamy course.
Speed! speed!

Alvarado. I will outstrip the wind. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE FOURTH.

SCENE.—*The Sea-shore.—Ships at anchor.—Enter ALVARADO, SANDOVAL, LUGO, ESTRADA, MARIA and Soldiers, with banners, &c.—ALVARADO, SANDOVAL and LUGO advance front.*

Lugo. Well, what says Barba, will he force the writ?

Alvarado. Not he—he dares not with our troops in view,
For we would knock the town about his ears,
And hang the craven catiff up on high,
A warning to all deputies who'd dare
Attempt the mandate of a tyrant lord.

Sandoval. Gallants, methinks it were good sport to take him
And leave him with the natives of some isle,
To teach them scholarship, and let them see
A different species of the *genus homo*.

Lugo. Nay, thou art wrong in that, for, by my soul,
There's naught of malhoo in the villain's make.
He's of a new genus, a nondescript,
A kind of thing not mentioned in the schools,
Something between a satyr and an ape,
But with a sallow visage, that looks like

A withered parchment on a deaths-head stretched.

Alvarado. Ha! ha! ha! thou'rt a good limner, Lugo,
Ay, and a naturalist—resign thy rank,
Be our *Virtuoso*, not a captain,
And Salamanca's learned *savans* may yet
Grant the diploma which thy lozel pranks
Forbade thy *alma mater* to bestow.

Lugo. Bethink thee of the kettle i' th' adage,
And show thy parchments for thine own degrees.
[*Trumpet without.*

But hark! the General's trumpet sounds a truce
To our jesting—he comes.

[*Flourish of trumpets, drums, &c.*—CORTEZ enters
from upper wing, followed by OLMEDO, HASSAN,
and ANTONIO, who joins MARIA.—The rest
ranged on either side, salute him as he passes.—
He comes front.—*Music ceases.*

Cortez. Gallant captains,
Methinks it argues fortune is our friend,
And half our conquest is already made,
Since thus you show your greediness for fame.
How holds the wind?

Alvarado. 'Tis little north of east.

Cortez. So, then 'tis fair—are all our pilots shipped?

Lugo. All are on board.

Cortez. Then we'll weigh anchor soon.

But where is Olid?

Sandoval. He'll be here anon.

Lugo. See where he comes, as eager for our cause,
As e'er was knight to fight for lady-love.

[*Enter OLID.*

Olid. My noble chief, and you, my worthy friends,
I greet ye all, compatriots in arms.

Cortez, (embracing Olid.) Welcome, most welcome, art thou
to our ranks,

It gladdens me to hail thee one of us.

Olid. It will be ever Olid's greatest pride
To follow where the noble Cortez leads,

(*Aside.*) Till I can grasp the truncheon of command.

[CORTEZ bows, and turns and seems to address ALVARADO, LUGO and SANDOVAL, and walks up to MARIA, as OLID continues addressing HASSAN.

Prythee, good Hassan, who is yonder page,
And who the dame that he holds converse with?
Methinks I somewhere have seen her before.

Hassan. The boy's a foundling, and her foster-son;
And she is wife to old Estrada there.

Olid, (aside.) 'Tis a strong likeness, and 'tis very strange.
Ah! ha! there's Cortez making speech to her.

Cortez, (to Maria.) Have we e'er known each other, gentle
dame?

Maria. My rank in life, may it please you, is too low
For such an honor to be claimed by me.

Cortez. Well, thou indeed hast reared a gallant boy,
And he shall henceforth have my kindest care.

Maria. Your Excellency hath my fervent prayers.
(Aside.) O! thou art noble even in thy faults.

[CORTEZ returns to the side of OLID.

Cortez, (aside, while crossing to centre.) By heaven! there is
expression in her eyes,

That speaks a language different from her words.

(To the soldiers.) Brave fellow-soldiers, countrymen
and friends,

Your punctual presence here deserves my thanks,
And from my heart you have them. Well you know
The malice of Velasquez would o'erturn
Our noble project, but your willing aid
Gives me to throw defiance in his teeth,
And thus I rend his warrant of arrest, [*Tears paper.*
And by this goodly sword, I truly swear, [*Draws.*
And by this sacred emblem at its hilt, [*The cross.*
That I will ne'er forsake ye in your need,
Will share your dangers, and partake your toil,
Lead you to fame and fortune, or lay down
My life in the attempt to compass them.

[*Shouts of Cortez forever! Long live brave Cortez!*

Our gallant vessels, in the offing, there,
Sit like fair halyons, brooding on the waves,
Nursing bright hopes of riches and renown;
And the long pennons, from their slender masts,
Sport in the breeze and beckon us away,
To win high honor by chivalrous deeds.
Let us at once embark, while fortune smiles:
But first invoke a blessing on our cause—
Father, thine office!

[CORTEZ and all kneel, except OLMEDO.

Olmedo, (pointing to the banner of the cross.) My friends and
children,

CORTEZ, THE CONQUEROR.

In this all-holy sign may ye go on,
Conquering, and to conquer. Be ye just,
And render mercy to a fallen foe,
As ye shall hope for mercy from on high,
And by this holy symbol be ye blest—
Henceforward and forever—bless ye! bless ye!
Cortez, (as they all rise.) Strike up, and onward to our
ships—strike up!

*[A grand march is played.—They form a procession
and march out to the music, CORTEZ and OLID
together.—Curtain falls.]*

—oo—

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.—SCENE FIRST.

SCENE.—*Street in the city of Mexico.—Enter TEUTILÉ and HIGH PRIEST, meeting.*

Teutilé. Health to thee, Lord Divine, most holy priest;
Glory to thy high office, and to thee.

Priest. Peace to Lord Teutilé, and may the Gods
Still on our monarch's favorite kindly smile.

Teutilé. Thanks, holy sir—thou art from sacrifice:
What do the augurs of the Gods portend,
Touching the band of white-fac'd warriors,
Whose strange deportment and most marv'lous deeds
Have filled the land with wonder and with awe?

Priest. Alas! our omens are of evil cast:
The Gods desert us in our utmost need—
Some dire calamity awaits our race.

Teutilé. Thou speakest marvels—what has come to pass?

Priest. This morn, our most renownéd prisoner,
The brave Tuscucan Chieftain, was brought forth,
As fittest offering for our Deities.
Upon the sacrificial stone we stretched
Our living victim. Deep into his side
I struck the sacred knife, but from the wound
There flowed no blood. Quickly I grasped his heart,
And tore it bloodless from his mangled corse,
And held it up; no vapor from it came,
But like an ice-clod in my hand it froze.
My fellow priests, awe-stricken, stood aghast,
And the ten thousand worshippers who knelt
In the great temple, beat their breasts, and groaned,
At the dread omen of the sacrifice;
Anon, loud peals of thunder burst on high,
And shook our altars, and fierce lightning played,
In vivid gleamings, round about our gods,
Who seemed to tremble in their holy shrines.
Thick clouds of blackness shrouded all the skies,
And gusts of wind blew out the sacred lights,

That ne'er for ages were extinct before.
 Soon through the darkness came a flash and peal,
 Which cleft in twain the temple—and the fire
 E'en now is bursting through the crackling roof—
 And in the dust, priests, worshippers and all,
 Bowed down their heads, and yells and shrieks of woe
 Broke from the crowd, and horror reigned supreme.

Teutilé. May the good Gods be merciful!—but how
 Do these mysterious omens tell our fate,
 Or theirs—those strangers, who, so reckless, seek,
 In spite of our dread monarch's high command,
 To seek admittance to his royal court?

Priest. There are old legends by our people held,
 Of ancient prophecies, which did foretell
 A race that from the orient would come,
 And seize our empire, even as our sires
 Did seize it when they fled from Aztalan:
 And now these marv'ulous demonstrations seem
 The auguries that heralds-like precede
 The true fulfilment of those prophecies.

Teutilé. Oft in my youth I heard the courtiers tell
 Of wondrous things foretold in olden time.

Priest. The king has summons for his counsel sent;
 The royal household in dismay is wrapt;
 Doubt and distraction have usurp'd men's minds.
 Art thou for court?

Teutilé. No—Montezuma hath
 Appointed me ambassador, to speak
 His royal pleasure to the stranger chief,
 And bidden me give him many gifts of gold,
 And precious gems, and costly merchandise,
 As tokens of his great munificence,
 And of our empire's grandeur. I must speed,
 My gracious master's mission to perform.

Priest. I must to court, to counsel with the king.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE SECOND.

SCENE.—*Vera Cruz.—Spanish Camp.—Sea in the distance.—CORTEZ, in splendid robes, seated in a magnificent tent.—Banner*

of the Cross, with motto.—Officers standing around, and all the Spaniards ranged in order.—OLMEDO to the right of CORTEZ, and MARINA and MARIA on his left, Page bearing his shield and helmet.

Cortez. Thus far propitiously our star has shone,
And, spite of threatening skies and raging winds,
And all the dangers that old Neptune throws
Around the weary voyager's frail bark,
We safely tread the land we've come to win,
Like coursers, eager from the starting point,
We'll strain each muscle till we reach the goal,
And, like the olden champions of the cross,
In the crusade the holy Hermit preached
Against the Oriental infidels,
We, 'neath our glorious banner's sacred folds,
Will onward march to plant the crucifix
Amidst the heathens of the Occident,
Who shall bow down and worship the true sign.

Olmedo. Heaven grant it so.

Cortez. It is the prayer of all.

[*Enter ESTRADA, O. P.*

Estrada. Your Excellency, an ambassador,
Lord Teutilé by name, who says he comes
From Montezuma, charged with heavy trusts,
Craves audience, and waits without.

Cortez. 'Tis well—
Greet him with ceremonious respect,
And with all signs of honor show him here.

[*Exit ESTRADA, O. P.*

Now, since my fellow soldiers have vouchsafed,
By their free suffrage, to confirm my power,
As representative of our lord, the king,
I feel that I am clothed with double trust;
First, by commission from Velasquez held,
Next, by the unbought choice of those I lead,
And it shall be my study so to acquit
Myself to them, and to my sovereign, too,
That none shall say Cortez has not done well.

[*Music.—Enter TEUTILÉ, O. P., shown in by ESTRADA, and followed by train, and by bearers with the banners of Mexico, caskets of gold and gems, golden wares, bales of merchandise, feather ornaments, &c., a large sum of gold, and morn of silver.—CORTEZ rises, salutes him, and resumes his seat.*

Cortez. Most welcome, good my lord.

Teutilé. All hail to thee!

Cortez. How fares thy liege, imperial Montezuma?

Teutilé. He keeps his health and state, but marvels much
That thou dost still persist in thy demand,
Even against his strong express'd desire,
To visit the great city where he reigns;
Yet, while he gives denial to thy wish,
He sends kind greetings, and warm words of love,
To thee and all thy friends; and gives, besides,
As tokens of his high regard for you,
These gems and wares, made from that yellow earth
Which all thy race so covet, and he sends
To the all-potent monarch whom ye serve,
These costly images, which represent
The sun-god reigning over golden day,
And the soft pearly queen of silver night.
These, as the tokens of his love he sends,
And bids ye go, and seek his land no more.

Cortez. The great munificence thy king displays
Our admiration wins, and for his gifts,
We are most grateful, but we still must hope
That he will give us audience at his court.
The mighty monarch whom we represent,
Having of Montezuma's glory heard,
Sent me, his messenger, to seek for him
Alliance with the crown of Mexico.
And I am with important message charged,
Which only to thy emperor I can tell,
And dare not seek my native land again,
Till I my sov'reign's mandate have fulfilled.

Teutilé. Your answer to my master I will bear,
And crave your leave to let my limners take
Drawings of all the marvellous things I see,
That I may show them to my sovereign liege.

Cortez. Thou hast it—Alvarado, pray thee see
These gifts disposed in safety, and see, too,
That he hath all facilities he wants;
And send by him some presents to his king:
A sword, bright ornaments, and things of show.

[*Music.* TEUTILÉ makes obeisance to CORTEZ.—ALVARADO salutes TEUTILÉ, and they exeunt together, preceded by bearers, &c. *Music ceases.*]

Good father (*to Olmedo*.) I would have thee try thy skill,

Thy most persuasive eloquence to wean
Yon Indian maiden, our interpreter,
From the base idols whom her people praise,
To the pure Deity whom we adore.

Olmedo. I have already on myself enjoined
The holy task.

Cortez. Heaven speed thee in't.
Her knowledge of the many languages
Of these idolatrous and diverse tribes,
That, thick as locusts, people all this land,
May tend to vast results in bringing o'er
These wretched heathens to the Christian faith.
I'll speak to her—Marina!

Marina, (*advancing towards Cortez, and making obeisance.*) My
dread lord!

Cortez. I'd have thee lend a willing, listening ear
To the good counsels of this holy priest.
He'll teach thee knowledge of a Deity
Of holiness, benevolence and love,
Unlike thy stony-imag'd God of Air,
Whom ye delight to worship with the blood
And reeking entrails of your fellow men.
The God we worship abhors human blood
In murderous sacrifice: His mandates teach
"Peace and good will towards men."

Marina. My noble lord,
I ne'er till late did hear of any Gods,
Save those my fathers always did adore,
Who, as they say, bring rain unto the fields,
And make the fruits and flowers to come forth,
Guard us in life from evil, and in death
Soothe and console us, and our spirits waft
To happy regions far above the sun.

Cortez. Thou hast been reared in error. Holy sir,
I pray thee speedily about thy task.

Olmedo. It is a Christian duty, doing which
Blesses the doer. I'll even now commence.
Come with me, maiden.

Marina. I attend thee, sir.

[*She crosses to OLMEDO, and he leads her out.—Enter SANDOVAL, O. P.*]

Sandoval. Our ships, according to your orders given,
Are all destroyed, and nought remain to us,
But glorious victory or heroic death,

Cortez. Why, that is well! We cannot now return
Even if we would, and so must needs go on,
Determined all to conquer gloriously;
And after-ages shall with wonder hear,
How half a thousand brave Castilian troops,
In a strange land, two thousand leagues from home,
And compassed round by myriads of foes,
Of their free will, cut off their own retreat,
And by their self-devotion won a world.

[Enter ALVARADO.

Alvarado. A deputation of Tlascalcan chiefs
Has just come in with offers from their tribe,
Of homage to our king, and they propose,
As allies on our march to Mexico,
To join our ranks with fifty thousand men.

[CORTEZ seizes the standard, and rushes front.

Cortez. Thanks for that news, for every man a thank,
Full fifty thousand thanks! O! cavaliers,
Let now your proud hearts send the crimson glow
Of hope-born blushes to your sea-blanch'd cheeks;
Let every breast exulting swell with joy; [Kneels.
And thou, most lovely goddess, Victory,
Whom warriors worship, and who art enthron'd
The crowned and sceptred queen of chivalry,
O, hear us, and accept our offering!
Vouchsafe the glory we anticipate;
In thy dear charge this holy standard take,
And wave it o'er this land! This spot of earth,
The first that did receive on these rich shores
The impress of our feet, we consecrate
Ever to thee, and to the holy cross;
And here a goodly city we will rear—

"*La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz.*"

[Rises.

Come, gallant Captains, brave Castilians, come!
Let us go forth to meet our new allies,
And on for Mexico and victory!

[March out, CORTEZ and OLID hand in hand, with
flourish of drums, trumpets, &c.

SCENE THIRD.

SCENE.—*A Short Wood Scene.—Moonlight.—Enter SANDOVAL and ALVARADO.*

Sandoval. The sun's last rays are lingering in the sky,
And, see, the moon is shining through yon trees.
How far, Don Pedro, have we marched to-day?

Alvarado. Indeed I know not, how far dost thou guess?

Sandoval. Some four short leagues, not more.

Alvarado. That's as I think,
And we have had to fight for ev'ry foot.
'Tis here-about the general means to camp.
Our men are all recalled, and our allies
Plac'd on the outposts. All our foes have fled.
To-morrow, with the sun we march betimes.

Sandoval. We'll need all rest to-night.

Alvarado. Ay, that we will,
After the toil and battle of to-day.
By my faith, Gonzalez, these Chohulons
Outfight the Moors; they kept my rascals all
Busy from morn till now, and, though they fell
Fast as the laaves in autumn, still they came,
Faster than rain-drops in a summer's shower.
By heaven! it was a splendid sight to see
Their troops advancing, tens of thousands strong,
With helms of quaint device; some like wild beasts,
And some like birds of every varied plume,
Rising from crowns of gold, studded with gems,
That to the sun gave back his rays again,
Bright as he sent them; their barbaric dresses,
In which the rainbow colors seemed to vie,
Which should outshine the other; and then, too,
Their flaunting banners of bright green and gold,
Embossed and pictured o'er with strange conceits;
Their odd accoutrements, bows, swords and spears,
Ta'en altogether made a pageant up,
Beyond the heraldry of Christendom.

Sandoval. It was indeed a sight magnificent.
How went the day with thee?

Alvarado. Not very ill:
I had five wounded, one right badly, too.

How fared thy troop ?

Sandoval. Why, for the work they did,
They came off well, with some few arrow wounds,
But none severe. Olid's and Lugo's men,
Far'd worse than mine, and in the General's troop,
I learn there's serious loss. Our brave allies
Have had three thousand slain. Thanks to our stars !
Those superstitious fools, our enemies,
Believe us men and horse together formed,
Centaurs complete, and all invulnerable.

Alvarado. Ay, and they think our cannon is no less
Than veritable thunder. How they fled,
Trampling each other down in their hot haste,
When they beheld their ranks mowed by our shot.
By our lady ! I laugh'd until I wept,
To see the knaves so frightened ; but, forsooth,
They ever and anon would rally them,
And give us work enough.

Sandoval. They did contest
Our this day's march with skillful bravery,
And paid our loss with their score thousands slain,
And with rich booty, too. Whom have we here ?
The General, and the brave Tlascalan chief.

[Enter CORTEZ MEXICATZIN, P. O.—SANDOVAL and
ALVARADO salute them.]

Cortez. Good eve, good gentlemen. Our noble friend,
Bold Mexicatzin, with his warriors,
Has this day done rich service to our lord.
Good chief, I have not opulence of words
Enough to speak my thanks, but I'll report
Thy gallant conduct to my sovereign liege,
Who will reward thee with imperial grace.

Mexicatzin. I do believe thee. I am wonder lost,
At the strange things I've this day heard and seen.
I've marked how powerful ye are in war,
How fierce, how monstrous, and how terrible,
Your mighty engines and brave animals,
By which ye've slain thousands upon thousands.
My people reck not of their loss to-day,
But pant to be in hated Mexico,
There to inflict dread vengeance, with thy aid,
On bloody Montezuma for the wrongs
The tyrant wretch has done to all our race.

Cortez. That thou shalt have, be sure. Good Alvarado,
See our bold friend befittingly bestow'd.
Give him a tent with full appliances ;
And give him, too, a helmet, shield and sword ;
Well hath he earned them, and will use them well.
Before thou dost betake thee to thy rest,
I'd have thee visit all our men-at-arms,
And make report to me. I'll pitch my tent
In yonder vale beside the rivulet.
Brave chief, good eve.

Mexicatzin. Great stranger, fare thee well ;
(*To Sandoval.*) And thou, most noble sir.

[*Exit O. P., with ALVARADO.*

Cortez. Good Sandoval,
Our this day's victory was dearly won ;
Two gallant steeds lie slain upon the field ;
A heavy loss indeed. Take chosen men,
And secretly their carcasses inter,
And with great care replace the new-dug sods,
And strew the place with leaves, and leave no sign
By which our foes may find that our good barbs
Are not invulnerable as they deem.

Sandoval. I will about it straight. [*He turns to go.*

Cortez. Hold thee awhile.
Gonzalez, tell me hast thou not of late
Marked aught in Olid's conduct seeming strange ?

Sandoval. Not I.

Cortez. Methinks he has grown much reserved ;
Ay, cold to me, while with his men-at-arms
He is familiar overmuch, and thus
Lessens his dignity and their respect.

Sandoval. To equals and superiors he was always
Cold and reserved, but to inferiors
He aye had gentle and most winning ways.
So to his men ; he seeks to win their love,
And, with their love, win their obedience, too.

Cortez. Well, well, no more of it. Meet me anon,
Near to my camping-place ; now to thy work.

[*Exit SANDOVAL, P. S.*

(*Solus.*) I'll watch that Olid, for I doubt him much.
His dark and double nature well I know,
And towards me he hath an olden hate,
For that he did, in my wild college days,

Suspect me with his sister, fair Amma,
Who fled from Salamanca, none knew where.
I'll tend him strictly, with a wakeful care.
Oh! he's a man I cannot watch too well,
Heaven's in his face, and in his heart is hell!

[Exit, O. P.]

—00—

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.—SCENE FIRST.

SCENE.—*A deep Wood of Tropical trees, vines, &c., in full foliage.*
Enter MARIA, with helmet, cuirass, shield and sword, followed
by OLMEDO.

Olmedo. Daughter, that warrior guise befits thee not :
It ill becoms a Christian woman, thus
To wear the dread habiliments of war,
And stain her hands with human beings' blood.
'Throw down the sword and take a distaff up,
Or get thee to thy prayers and rosary,
Thy station is not in the field of fight,
Thou shouldst be rather by the dying bed,
Bestowing comfort to the parting soul,
Or tending at the wounded soldier's couch,
Soothing his agony with healing balm.
Shame on thee! that thou hast unsexed thyself.

[During the above, CORTEZ enters unobserved, and stands apart until MARIA has spoken, and then moves down front.

Maria. Sir Priest, take back thy taunt, and mind thy beads,
And keep thy station as I keep to mine,
For know ye, sir, that I was born and bred
A soldier's daughter. I'm a soldier's wife,
And keep mine own. Had I been bred to church,
I would have made a better priest than thou.
Thy lily liver ill becomes a man ;
Thy chicken heart would shame a Carmel nun !
Go doff thy cassock, put on petticoats,
Assume the distaff, and go spin. Go, go !
Thou paltry priest, thou most unmanly man.

Cortez. Prythee, fair Maria, speak him more fair,
And reverence more his Reverence's cloth.

Maria. An't please ye, General, it is his cloth
That I do reverence, and not the man,
Who to his cloth is most irreverent.
That ever he should dare the wearing it !

He eats a soldier's rations, and takes up
A soldier's room, while we have need of men,
Or women either, who have skill at arms.

Cortez. Tut, tut, have done this wrangling—get thee hence !
Go to thy husband, and hold speech with him.

Maria. My husband dares not bait me as he has.

Cortez, (Aside.) Faith, I believe thee, or thou wouldst beat
him.

(Aloud,) Thou shouldst the holy father's counsels take
In better spirit. They are kindly meant,
And 'tis his province to correct and chide.
But since thou hast a warrior become,
And truly a most brave and gallant one,
'Thou dost forget what is a churchman's due.
But no more of this—go to thy husband,
Bid him lead down his men to the huge rock
That overhangs the spring in yonder vale.
There must they watch to-night. [Exit MARIA.]

(Aside, looking after her.) It seemeth strange,
But there's a something in that woman's looks,
And in her presence, that gives me unrest
And why, I know not. *(Aloud.)* Well, reverend sir,
How speed thy counsels with thy proselyte,
The Indian maid, Marina ?

Olmedo. She has passed
Through the baptismal rites, and hath received
The holy sacrament, and doth profess
The faith and rule of holy mother church.

Cortez. Full well, good father, hath thou done thy task.
From this first fruit, first convert of thy zeal,
We'll augur kindly, and with fervor pray
That the all-blessed cross may soon supplant
The idols of these heathens, and the church,
The Apostolic, right true Church of Rome,
By Peter's blessings, govern all this land.

Olmedo. Amen !

Cortez. Here comes the lovely neophyte.

Olmedo. I take my leave. [Exit.]
[Enter MARINA, dressed in the style of a Spanish lady.]

Cortez. Sweet Marina, welcome !
Thou art thrice welcome, since thou comest now,
Thus cloth'd in Christian garb and Christian faith,

Adorning each, and each adorning thee.

Marina. Health to my lord !

Cortez. I oftentimes have thought
That I would like to hear thy history :
The eve is calm, the perfume-laden air
Is fresh and sweet. I will with pleasure list,
The while thou tellest it. Go on. [*Leads her to a seat.*]

Marina. 'Tis brief.

In Coat-zac-u-alco, in a village
Call'd Pain-alla, my mother gave me birth.
I was her only child—my sire soon died :
Of many wealthy districts he was lord,
To Montezuma paying fealty.
My mother very soon again was wed,
And by this second union had a son.
A slave, about my age, took sick and died :
She and her lord gave out that it was I,
And clothed themselves in mourning. Privily
I was conveyed into Xi-all-an-co,
Thence to Tobasco, and there sold a slave,
Was captured oft, and oft was sold again,
Till my good fortune made me gift to thee,
My gen'rous master.

Cortez. Tell me what caused
Thy unnatural mother's cruelties.

Marina. She and her lord knew that my legal rights
Would bar their son from the inheritance,
And me not loving, sold me, as I've said,
That he might be sole heir.

Cortez. By my conscience !
Thou shalt be reinstated in thy rights.
The faithful service thou hast rendered me,
Has won thy ransom o'er a thousand times.

Marina. I have but done my duty to my lord.

Cortez. My sweet interpreter, most eloquent,
Thy tongue interprets 'twixt these tribes and me :
Let thy meek eyes interpret love for me.

Marina. Can Cortez speak of love to his poor slave ?

Cortez. Ay, by my soul ! for I do feel it here.
O ! my dear captive, thou hast captured me !
No more art thou my slave, for I am thine.

Marina. I am thine own.

Cortez. My love, my life, my joy !

Marina. O ! my beloved lord ! [*Rests her head on his shoulder.*]

Cortez. Come, let me lead thee.

Marina. Whither wouldst thou go ?

Cortez. To yonder vale, where, from the rifted rock,
 That gleams with emeralds and amethysts,
 The pure, sweet stream, like liquid silver, pours,
 To glide and gurgle over grains of gold ;
 And from its bosom, now and then, leaps up
 Some finny habitant, whose shiny scales,
 Like diamonds, sparkle in the night queen's light,
 A little moment, and he dives again.
 Down in that vale, my love, we'll rest to-night.
 Our evening meal shall be delicious fruits :
 Apples more choice than Eve's forbidden one,
 Sugary pears, and luscious pomegranates,
 The juicy orange, and bananas rich,
 The mellow ananas, and blushing peach,
 That may have stolen its hue from thy bright cheeks,
 The melting, pulpy, sweet, wine-giving grape,
 And nectarines, whose most exquisite juice
 The olden heathens feigned their gods did quaff ;
 These, and spicy nuts, and pungent berries,
 And golden melons, shall compose our meal.
 The mock-bird, sweetest of all choristers,
 Shall make us music. The gorgeous cactus,
 Soft-scented pink, and delicate lilac,
 Sweet heart's ease, mignonette, and heliotrope,
 The lady lily and the maiden rose,
 And other of fair Flora's favorites,
 Blooming about, will yield us their perfume ;
 The fire-flies, like jewels on the wing,
 Shall sparkle round us, and the busy leaves,
 That ne'er cease wagging in the cooling breeze,
 Like tongues shall whisper murmers of delight.

Marina. O ! my dear lord, thy fancy is too wild ;
 It hath unhorsed thy reason. Why, methinks
 Thou hast been learning tales of those strange lands
 That the bright sun first smiles on in the morn,
 And now rehearsest them to me ; of such
 Father Olmedo oft hath told me.

Cortez. Nay,
 I speak of things about and near to us,
 In this bright land, than which is none more bright,

And I must love it since it gave me thee.
 But let us to our vale—the evening wanes,
 Our couch shall be the sweet stream's mossy bank,
 With whose rich velvet Persia's famous looms
 Cannot contend. Our curtained canopy
 Shall be of woodbine, jasmine and vines,
 Such as love most for lovers to make bowers.
 And when at times the wind shall part their leaves,
 The saucy moon, and cunning winking stars,
 Shall through them peer, and smilingly look down,
 Lending us just enough of their soft light
 To read our loves in one another's eyes.
 When envious sleep shall poppy-dew our lids,
 We'll slumber as we deem the angels do,
 Dreaming of joys renewed, and new delights,
 And sure of waking to a blissful morrow.

Marina. Thou pratest fondly.

Cortez. Sweet, thou art my theme.

Marina. I fear 'twill weary thee.

Cortez. My life will first.

[CORTEZ leads her to the rear of the stage, and off.—
 OLID enters, O. P., and looks after them as he
 speaks.—LUGO enters from upper wing, P. S.,
 and salutes them.]

Olid. So, so, the pretty slave,
 The gift of the Tobascans, our late foes,
 Is like to prove our General's favorite,
 His chief adviser and first counsellor.
 A fair good eve, Francisco.

Lugo. Sir, to you.

I met the General, as I came along,
 With his new toy, Marina. He seems fond
 As a young bridegroom in his honeymoon.

Olid. But now I marked them, as they went from hence.
 Methinks, forsooth, our Cortez keeps his state,
 And sways it like a king.

Lugo. Ay, that he does,
 And it becomes him, too.

Olid. What's in this man,
 That he should be more great than thou or I?
 He was not so in youth. Thy elder, much,
 At school he sat upon the backward form,
 Whilst thou o'ertopped thy fellows in thy class.
 He'd no report for wit or bravery;

No fame whate'er save the vile praise that's won
 By brothel gallants for their revelries ;
 And now he doth set up a sovereign's state.
 He calls us captains, when, in fact, we are
 Mere halberdiers that help to swell his pomp,
 And do his bidding. He ne'er asks of us
 Advice or counsel, and we risk as much,
 And fare more hard than he. Why, Francisco,
 Neither in scholarship or soldiership,
 Is he the tithe of thee.

Lugo. Look ye, Olid,
 We cannot all be first, and so perforce,
 Some must be second—the captain to the chief,
 And to the captain the mere man at arms,
 And so through every grade—thus wags the world,

Olid. But Cortez, ere he's firmly footed here,
 Assumes the august portage of a king,
 Portending an outstretching will to grasp
 At power absolute, and to exact
 Homage and reverence more than is his due.
 Doth it not seem so, friend ?

Lugo. I must confess
 I like not well the ostentatious show
 He has so much assumed, nor do I like
 The lordly tone he gives his orders in ;
 And I have marked that he has dropped, of late,
 Those words of courtesy and blandishment
 'Twas once his wont to lard his speech withal,
 When he addressed his officers.

Olid. Ay, true.
 And in his letters home to our king Charles,
 He most elaborately doth set forth
 His services, his hardships and his toils,
 As if the brave achievements thus far won
 Were all his doings, all the glory his.
 He writes the king, I have done this and that,
 And thus and so—all mine, all Cortez, Cortez—
 Nothing but Cortez ; and his officers,
 He mentions in the general catalogue,
 None by his name, but in the common roll,
 With common men-at-arms. I know not how
 Other men's stomachs may endure these slights,
 But, Lugo, for myself, I want my share,

My full share, mark me, of the glory got
In this rich enterprise.

Lugo. And I want mine,
And I will have it, too.

Olid. Francisco, think!
We tread a vast and mighty continent.
Larger than Europe, richer far than Indus!
Why, 'tis the ancient Ophir, which to reach,
For three years tasked the sails of Solomon;
Peopled by tribes that have no skill in war,
To hurt us much, and easily wrought on
To hurt each other. And we have proved
A bare battallion of brave Spaniards worth
Whole tens of thousands of these heathen troops.
We are two thousand miles from native Spain.
Our monarch's sceptre ne'er can reach so far.
Here's room enough to cut out new Castiles,
New Arragons and Granadas, every one
An empire's self. Shall Cortez sway them all?

Lugo. No, no, by heaven!

Olid. O! my dear Francisco,
Is there not here a glorious theatre,
For high ambition to enact a part,
A hero's part?

Lugo. Indeed, indeed, there is,
By my true faith.

Olid. O! for some loyal soul,
To plot with mine for glory!

Lugo. Seek it here.

Olid. Come, brother, to my breast. [*They embrace.*]

Lugo. Now, Christoval,
Tell me thy plans—give me to know them all.
Here's head to plot, and arm to execute,
And spirit to endure.

Olid. Good, my good friend.
My own conceptions are as yet but crude;
My schemes as yet all undigested are,
But from the chaos of my teeming brain,
I'll ere long fashion an harmonious plan,
Which then we will discourse of. The meanwhile,
Think thou, dear Lugo—let thy thoughts beget
Some system, and the two we will compare,
And choose between them.

SCENE SECOND.

SCENE.—*Throne-room in MONTEZUMA'S Palace.*—MONTEZUMA in magnificent robes, on the throne.—HIGH PRIEST, and NINNAH and Female Attendants, on his right.—Nobles and Guards ranged on either side, with banners, and a golden sun and a silver moon.

Montezuma. Most reverend priest, and nobles of the State,
We have convened ye all, in council here,
To learn the answer Lord Teutilé brings
To the commands we sent the stranger chief.
We are by hasty couriers advised
That our ambassador is speeding back.

[*Trumpets and drums without.*
Hark! heralds now announce his near approach.

[*Music.—Enter bearers with scrolls representing a ship, a crossbow, a carbine, a cannon, a Spaniard on horseback.—The bearers arrange themselves so as to exhibit the scrolls both to MONTEZUMA and the audience, as they unroll them.—TEUTILÉ enters at the end of his suite, with Spanish sword sheathed in his hand. He and his suite make lowly reverence to the throne.*

Right welcome home, my lord; we long to hear
The imports of thy mission,

Teutilé. Mighty liege,
I duly gave your mandates to the chief
Of the white warriors, the great Ma-la-che,
And with respect, but firmness, he replied,
Saying he served a monarch whose behests
He carried out in whatsoe'er he did.
He has been joined by our Tlascalan foes,
And with their aid has vanquished the Chohulans,
And hitherward the allies now approach.

Montezuma. Ye Gods! this cannot be.

Teutilé. 'Tis so, my liege,
They come in mighty force, but 'stead of threats,
Ma-la-che sends thee many words of grace,
And many gifts of strange and rare conceit.
And substance hitherto unknown to us.

Montezuma. Thy tale is marvellous indeed. Go on.

Teutilé. Great king! behold this shining, wondrous knife,
Of some strange metal, to us all unknown.

[*Draws the sword.*

Its blade cuts keener than our sharpest flint.
 He sends thee this one, hilted with a cross,
 An emblem which they deem a holy sign,
 And rear it of huge logs set up on high,
 And kneel to it as we do to our Gods.

Montezuma. Thou dost amaze me.

Teutilé.

See my limners' work !

[Scrolls are unrolled, and he points with the sword to each, as he describes them.]

In great canoes like this, with huge white wings,
 That skim'd the mighty seas from lands remote,
 Enclosed by hundreds in their pregnant wombs,
 Those fearful strangers have been borne till spawned
 Upon our shores, to work us weal or woe.

Montezuma. Do I only dream ?

Teutilé.

All is too true my liege !

Montezuma. Go on ! go on !

Teutilé.

Now heed me well, great king.

This bow of strange device o'ershoots our own ;
 With this long tube, that sends forth smoke and fire,
 They kill the tiny sparrow on the wing ;
 E'en when his flight is highest in the heavens.

Montezuma. Most wonderful !

Teutilé.

And yet more wonderful :

This engine flashes fatal lightning forth.
 And far out-roads the thunder, and it sends
 To distances remote, great heavy globes,
 That cleave the clear air all invisible,
 Striking tall pines that have for ages stood,
 Shattering them in splinters.

Montezuma.

Are these men,

Or are they Gods ?

Teutilé.

Or Gods or more than men !

These warriors strange are clad in substance hard,
 Impenetrable to our keenest flint.
 And here observe : upon these monstrous beasts.
 They mount at pleasure, and together join
 And of the twain make but one animal,
 That can outstrip the antelope in speed,
 And match the giant tapir in his strength.
 Earth trembles at its tread, and the deep vales,
 Re-echo far and wide its horrid cries.

Montezuma. Wonder upon wonder ; strange and marvellous !

Can all these things be true?

Teutile.

Most true, dread liege.

Montezuma. O! then, alas! the ancient prophecies,
That did foretell the downfall of our race,
By bearded white men from the Eastern seas,
Are near fulfilment. Most direful portents
Have announced our end. The great temple burned;
The placid waters in Tescuco's lake
Toss'd in huge angry billows, white with foam;
The rill, where but a short half-hour ago,
A weary man could scarcely slake his thirst,
Now to a mighty troublous torrent swollen;
The nitid star that strangely shone of late,
Lighting the sky with a long fiery train,
And the moon hiding the bright sun at noon,
Till misty darkness spread o'er all the earth.
These and the visions by Papatzin seen,
Which she, my sister, tearfully to me
Recounted, as on her death couch she lay.
All, all! are omens that presage our doom.
O! woe is me; let's to the temple all,
There to propitiate the angry Gods,
As best we may, with prayer and sacrifice.

[*Rises, descends the throne, and marches down, joined by
HIGH PRIEST and TEUTILÉ.—The rest of the
suite form procession, two and two, and march
out (as scene closes) to solemn music.*

SCENE THIRD.

SCENE.—*Night.—A room in a house in Chohula.—Table spread for
a banquet.—Fruits, golden goblets, vases, pitchers, &c.—ALVA-
RADO and SANDOVAL opposite each other at the head of the
table.—LUGO and OLID next, facing each other.—Soldiers on
either side below them, all seated on stools.—SANDOVAL seems
partially intoxicated.—Torches burning.*

Alvarado. Well, gallant cavaliers, we may awhile
Indulge in honest mirth and revelry,
Since these Chohulans have made peace with us,
And granted quarter here within their walls,
To all save our brave Tlascalan allies,

Whom their old enmity at distance keeps ;
 So, let's improve the time ; then pledge me all—
 May we, thus met to-night, thus meet again,
 All joyously, "*to revel in the halls*
Of the Montezumas !"^s

Sandoval. Fill bumpers, all !

All. Halls of the Montezumas !

[*They drink, and all but OLID turn their goblets down.*]

Sandoval. Why, Olid !

How now, thou slight'st our pledge, drink, man, drink
 deep ;

Sit not thus moody, moping o'er thy wine

As melancholy as a moulting owl ;

Come, I drink thy health ! [*Pours out, and they drink.*]

Olid. And I drink thine.

Sandoval. Lugo ! let's have a sentiment from thee.

Lugo. I'm not much given to sentiments, thou know'st,

But I'll give one that's ever uppermost

In all our thoughts,—Here's *Wealth, women and wine !*

All. Wealth, women and wine ! [*all drink.*]

Sandoval. Good ! Lugo, good ! though thou dost not claim to
 be literare, thy toast is still a good alliteration.

'Tis to the point. Thy three W's come in right well, but damn
 the wine ; I like this aqua ardiente better. (*Pours out.*) I will
 reword thy toast in vulgar vernacular, but keep it still as pointed
 to the point, and as alliterate. Now for it—*Lucre, lust and liquor !*

All. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Alvarado. Omit your last two items, Cavaliers,
 The first's enough, for he who has the gold,
 Is worse than fool who cannot buy the rest.
 Beauty can be bought e'en though we pay
 The princely price the fair Aspasia won
 From wealthy Alcibiades, and wine
 Is marketable, though the best be dear
 As the libation Cleopatra pour'd
 For love of her love-conquer'd conqueror,
 Great Antony.

Sandoval. Cease, Alvarado, cease,
 Leave thy old musty college classic lore,
 Give us a song !

All. Ay, ay, a song, a song !

Sandoval. Sing us the one I heard thee hum last night,
 That of thine own composing. 'T will just suit

Time and occasion now.

Alvarado. Well, well, I'll try—(*sings—and all join in chorus.*

In this clime so lovely beaming,
In this land with riches teeming,
There is store of wealth to gain,
And a niche in glory's fane,
For the bold, bold, bold!

In the gulches of its mountains,
In the sands beside its fountains,
In its valleys, and its hills,
In its rivers and its rills,
There is gold, gold, gold!

Here, there's beauty for our winning,
And no penance for Love's sinning,
And here rosy wine to flow,
That will keep our hearts a-glow,
When we're old, old, old!

[*As the chorus is finished, while all are rapping and applauding with shouts, "Hurra! Bravo!" &c., CORTEZ enters hastily from above, with drawn sword, and comes front. They all rise.*

Cortez. Fie, cavaliers! let this vile revel cease,

This is no time for mad debauchery.

We've been inveigled here to be betrayed

By treachery of these base Chohulans.

Marina overheard the plotting foe

Who even now encompass us about;

The streets are dug with pitfalls for our horse,

Each house is now a castle garrison'd,

Arm'd with huge stones and missiles of all kinds

To hurl down on our heads—to arms! to arms!

[*Loud alarms without.*

The works begun, rally your forces all,

Keep firm your posts, nor budge a single inch,

"Till I give word. Stay not a moment more,

Away! away!

[*Exeunt ALVARADO and SANDOVAL P. S., OLID and LUGO O. P., and the rest severally.—Enter MARINA, hastily.*

My fair deliverer.

I must be gone, be brief!

Marina. O my dear Lord!

From a sometime fellow-slave with me,

A Chohulan maiden, I have just learned

There is a winding dell a short space hence,
That leads to a thick forest, where embossed,
A ruined temple stands. The place once gained—
And the road there but poorly guarded is—
You can hold out till joined by your allies,
For with small force it is impregnable.

Cortez. My guardian angel ever! thanks, still thanks!
I must bestow thee safely, then to horse,
These traitors to chastise.

Marina. This way, my lord.
I will point out the path.

Cortez. Let's make all speed,
For now, if ever, haste stands us in need.

—oo—

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.—SCENE FIRST.

SCENE.—Noonday.—*The Grand Square in the city of Mexico.—The Palace on one side.—The Great Temple in back ground.—The Lake and Mountains in the distance.—Music.—MONTEZUMA enters from left hand, in a splendid palanquin, borne by six Mexicans, and ornamented with feathers and embroidered cloth of gold.—He is attended by the HIGH PRIEST and TEUTILÉ, his daughter NINNAH, and a train of Nobles bearing the standard and other insignia of Mexico.—The palanquin is set down in centre.—CORTEZ and all the Spaniards enter at the same time from the right hand, with the banners and ensigns of Spain.—After all have formed, the curtains of the palanquin are withdrawn, and MONTEZUMA steps out and greets CORTEZ.*

Montezuma. Great stranger, we greet thee with great welcome
To thee, thy friends and followers,

Cortez. Dread sire,
In name of the high potentate I serve,
Thy welcome I receive, and thus embrace—
[*As he advances with arms extended, to embrace MONTEZUMA, TEUTILÉ interposes, taking hold of him.*

Teutilé. Hold! Ma-la-che—lay not irreverent hands
Upon his sacred majesty. Our Gods
Forbid the act as profanation dire.

Cortez. Pardon me; I only meant the greeting
By which my countrymen attest their love,
And show their veneration.

Montezuma. We do receive thee as ambassador
From a great monarch in a far off land,
Who seeks our friendship. For his royal sake,
And for the noble bearing of thyself,
Again we bid thee welcome. We have heard
Of wond'rous actions that have marked thy course,
And marv'lous things that form thy retinue.
Thy advent was not unexpected here,
For it was long foretold us by our Gods;
And we have fitting preparations made
To entertain thee and thy followers,
For the brief time thou may'st sojourn with us,

In manner worthy of thy high estate,
 As our accredited and honor'd guest,
 And our own dignity as royal host.
 So, please thee, to our palace let's repair.

Cortez. Thanks for your kingly bounty, august sire!
 Humbly we will attend your majesty.

[MONTEZUMA is reseated in the palanquin, and COR-
 TES turns to ALVARADO, aside.]

Cortez. Now have we reach'd the goal of all our hopes.

Alvarado. I scarcely can repress my rising joy.

Cortez. Be calm. He thinks our stay will be but brief;
 Let us but feel our footing firm and sure,
 And then he may eject us—if he can.

[*Procession marches out to Music, as scene closes.*]

—o—

SCENE SECOND.

—

SCENE.—*Night.—A Walled Court.—Enter OLID and LUGO, in close conference.*

Olid. 'Twill be the quickest and the surest way,
 And set us free at once from all misgivings.

Lugo. I like not this dark assassination;
 It is ignoble, cowardly—

Olid. Pshaw! pshaw!
 Leave that to me alone, my gallant friend;
 I will absolve thee from all sin in it;
 From all compunctions, and all dreamy doubts.
 The end, dear Lugo, will atone the means.
 I will stir up the hatred of the Moor
 To do the deed; and when the deed is done,
 Why, let him answer it, whilst thou and I
 Are free from taint of any part in it:
 And when the General's obsequies are o'er,
 We and our friends can well control the rest.

Lugo. Well, as thou wilt; but still I like it not.

Olid. Here Hassan comes; prithee away! away!
 And keep thy counsel. [*Exit LUGO, and enter HASSAN.*]

Good eve, good Hassan!

Hassan. My humble service to thee, noble sir.

[*Makes reverence.*]

At thy behest I meet thee here to-night.

Olid. Thanks for thy promptness. I did lately hint
How thou might'st gain at once thy liberty,
And vengeance on thy cruel tyrant lord ;
And in deep grief I have bethought me much
Of thy sad lot, by Cortez so abused.

Hassan. He is my master, and his slave am I.

Olid. Thy master ? Yes. But why thy tyrant too ?
I've heard him call thee liar, and base slave,
And saw him on thy person strike quick blows,
In heavy anger with his flattened sword ;
I saw the fiery gleamings of thine eyes,
Darting defiance from their shaggy brows,
Like lightnings flashing from black clouds of storm ;
I marked the hot blood light thy dusky cheek,
The hard upheavings of thy stalwart chest,
The nervous biting of thy nether lip,
And the convulsive clenching of thy hands,
At the foul insult. Heavens ! how I grieved,
That thou of noble, ay, of royal blood,
Should'st be degraded so.

Hassan. I'm in his power,
By sad reverse of war ; were he in mine,
Perchance he might have cause, as strong and good,
To owe me hatred, as I now owe him.

Olid. Methought the greatest luxury of thy race
Was vengeance ! Hast thou no huge-mouthed wrongs,
That daily, nightly, loudly call for it ?
Thou wear'st a dagger. Know'st thou not its use ?

Hassan. Ay, to defend mine honor and my life,
Not the assassin's felon blow to strike.
For my revenge, to heaven I look up ;
Allah is great and just.

Olid. And so he is,
And in his justice, puts within thy reach
The means of vengeance. Thy cursed tyrant sleeps,
And to his couch thou hast a free access,
One blow—vengeance and liberty are thine.
Wilt strike ?

Hassan. I cannot strike a sleeping man.

Olid. Would'st spare the adder, for that it's asleep,
That on the morrow thou may'st feel its fangs ?
Sleeping or waking, at confessional,

Or kneeling, praying at the altar's foot ;
No matter where, I'd pause not at the deed,
Were I so damn'd in wrong as thou has been,
And with all ease could safely do the act,
As now thou can'st, had'st thou but nerve to dare.

Hassan. I've not nerve enough to be a villian,
And dare not do the deed, e'en if I dare.
No Spaniard I, nor Christian either,
And can do no act dishonorable——

Olid. Dishonorable ! never name it so ;
'Tis no dishonor to avenge a wrong.
Man's heritance is glorious liberty !
The worst of felons is the tyrant thief
Who would purloin it, or who, finding it,
Would basely keep it from its owner's right.
The wrongs revenged upon great Cæsar's self,
What were they ? Merely common slights bestowed,
On noble Brutus, Cassius, and the rest ;
But here thy wrongs are of the deepest hue ;
A slave, lowest of slaves, thou art forbid
The common usages of common men,
But must comport thee at thy tyrant's will—
Must hold his stirrup when he needs would mount,
Must groom his horse, must be his scavenger ;
With every menial office meanly charged—
And for thy guerdon, curses, taunts, and blows.
Is such a station fitting the proud son
Of a puissant race, whose ancestry,
Claimed kindred with the brightest lights of heaven ?

Hassan. The lives of men are swayed by Destiny ;
I brook the ills that I perforce must bear,
Albeit, unmitigated.

Olid. O Hassan !
Think of the former glory of thy race,
The royal blood that flows within thy veins,
The station, honors, that were lately thine,
And the abasement of thy present state,
So abject now, by this foul tyrant made.
Think, too, of the most hellish cruelties
He wreaks on these once happy Indian tribes ;
Then think, one blow will thee and all avenge !
And by one death save myriads of lives,
And make thee benefactor to mankind !

Hassan. Why not strike the blow thyself?

Olid. Good Hassan!

He is both of my country and my creed,
And therefore is protected from my hand;
Besides, the act in me were treason rank,
Which done by thee, were retribution just,
For his continuous and countless wrongs.

Hassan. That he doth wrong me deeply is most true.
I'll ponder well the things that thou hast said;
But, noble sir, the time is not yet ripe.

Olid. 'Twill ripen early; and I count on friends
Sworn strong against him, and who will insure
Safety to thee, rewards, and liberty!
But now 'tis time to set my second watch.
Con o'er thy wrongs, and keep them still at heart,
That thought of them may rouse thy sleeping soul
To just revenge. When thou has made thy mind,
Report to me its course determinate.

Hassan. Full half my mind is now already made,
And soon I will report its purpose, all.

Olid. Good night! Good Hassan.

[*Exit.*

Hassan. Noble sir, adieu!

[*Looks musingly after him.*

O holy Allah! mark these Christian men;
Though lust of power and greediness of gold,
They've crossed the raging seas, thousands of leagues,
To bathe these happy people in their blood—
To make them slaves, uproot their innocence,
And plant among them every heinous sin;
And all these deeds they do in Heaven's name,
And ask its blessings on their awful crimes!
Now, they would plot to cut each other's throats,
And fain would make an instrument of me.
What if I follow out this Olid's hint?
I'll have another master—nothing more—
Perhaps a worse one, or a fate still worse.
I will awhile seem to let him use me,
Till I have learned his plans and names of friends:
Then to the General I'll report the whole.
If I must be a slave, I'll prove, at least,
Myself a faithful, honest, and true man. [*Exit.*

SCENE THIRD.

SCENE.—*Great Square in the city of Mexico.—Temple and Imperial Palace in back-ground.—Large Idols, representing the God of Light and the God of Air.—An altar, with fire burning upon it, the HIGH PRIESTS and Attendants about the altar.—A large sacrificial stone in centre of stage, on which are two Mexican Gladiators, each fastened by the ankle to a ring, and each armed with a Mexican shield and sword.—The Spaniards arranged on one side of the stage and the Mexicans on the other, each party with their appropriate arms, banners, and insignia.—MONTEZUMA and CORTEZ in front.*

Montezuma. Behold, Ma-la-che, these two captives here,
 Chieftains and leaders of two hostile bands,
 Who, against me, their lord and sov'reign,
 Basely conjoin'd in a vile trait'rous league,
 Refusing tealty and their homage due,
 And on my loyal subjects waging war.
 They were made pris'ners with unholy arms
 Uprais'd against my dignity and rule ;
 And by our laws are doom'd for sacrifice,
 And with each other they shall now contend ;
 But still this chance in mercy we vouchsafe
 To him, the victor in this desp'rate fight,
 We freely grant both life and liberty.
 The vanquish'd at yon altar shall be made
 A fitting off'ring to our outrag'd gods.

Cortez. Methinks this custom is most barbarous,
 Unworthy of thy most imperial self,
 And sinful in the sight of the true God.

Montezuma. It is a usage ancient with our race,
 And by our deities enjoined on us.
 Now let the combat be at once begun.

[*Music.—The combatants assail each other furiously, and after the exchange of a few blows, CORTEZ commands them to desist.*]

Cortez. Stop this unholy, this infernal scene,
 Unbind them !

Montezuma. Beware, Ma-la-che ! anger not our Gods
 With blasphemy.

Cortez. Down with their stony Gods !

Seize on the king, but harm his person not.

[CORTEZ draws his sword and he and the other Spaniards assail the Mexicans, who make but slight resistance.—The Gladiators are unloosed. MONTEZUMA is taken prisoner; the Idols are overturned, and the curtain falls amid loud alarums.

00

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.—SCENE FIRST.

SCENE.—*Hall of a Prison.—On the side, at one end, the door of a cell.—Sentinel pacing on guard.—OLID enters, muffled in cloak.—Sentinel presents carbine.*

Sentinel. Who goes there ?

Olid. (*Throwing back his cloak.*) Good comrade, do'st not know me.

Sentinel. Yes ; but without the word thou canst not pass.

Olid. "Castile and Arragon !"

Sentinel. All's well ; pass on.

Olid. I commend thy caution.

Where's thy prisoner ?

Sentinel. (*Pointing to door.*) Knock and he'll come forth.

Olid. (*Knocks at the door and it opens, and he leads forth MONTEZUMA in chains, clad in plain white tunic, &c.*) (*To Sentinel.*

We would be private.

Sentinel. I will step apart. [*Exit, P. S.*

Olid. (*Kneeling to Montezuma.*) Mighty monarch ! my heart is rived in twain,

At these vile fetters on thy royal limbs,
These loathsome walls wherein thou art immur'd ;
O would that I might give thee liberty.

Montezuma. Rise ! rise ! this is no palace hall of state,
No place for homage or for courtiership,
No ensigns these of kingly dignity.

[*Holds up his chains.*

What boon crav'st thou of royalty in chains ?

Olid. (*Rises.*) A boon most precious, dear to me as life,
Yet no less dear to thee, and granting which,
May soon restore thy sceptre and thy sway.

Montezuma. I marvel at thy speech. Say on, say on.

Olid. Great king ! thou know'st I hold a station high,
Of trust and honor, with my countrymen.
In full reliance on thy majesty,
I would to thee in confidence impart,
A secret of vast import.

Montezuma.

Speak freely;

I pledge my royal word to keep thy faith.

Olid. Know, briefly, sire, I head a trusty force,

In numbers adequate, with firm resolve,

'The proud usurping Cortez to depose

From power, he tyrannically wields—

Grinding thy people with his cruelties,

Thy august person loading with base chains;

Assuming his own king's authority,

Heaping dishonor on his royalty,

By hellish deeds done in his sacred name—

Thee, 'tis our purpose to restore again,

To thy imperial dignity and rule,

If thou wilt yield thy countenance and aid.

Montezuma. How can I aid thee with these shackles on?

Olid. Give me some sign or token, by which means

I can, with confidence, approach thy friends,

Who o'er thy loyal subjects hold control.

Montezuma. How can I know that I may trust thee

Olid. Sire!

My present action guarantees my truth.

My fortunes and my life are all at risk,

By this, my errand to thy majesty;

Besides, I am an humble suitor too

For favor, which, if kindly granted me,

Will give thee title ever to command

My services in whatsoever cause.

Montezuma. What favor canst thou mean?

Olid. Most royal sir,

Thou hast a daughter, lovely, dutiful—

The peerless Ninnah, who has won my heart,

(A heretofore unconquer'd citadel,)

To yield submissive to her youthful charms.

O give her me to wife, and I will prove

Ever thy grateful servant and her own.

Montezuma. What doubts my bosom may have held before,

I cast away, and I will trust thee, sir.

Take this imperial signet, 'tis a trust [Gives a ring.

Only confided in emergency,

And only then to one whose love and truth

We can rely on. Seek Lord Teutilé,

And the most holy High Priest of the State;

Show it to them, and thy intents reveal,

'T will be thy warrant that thou com'st from me,
 And they, with all their means, will give thee aid.
 See Ninnah, too, and with her press thy suit
 As best thou canst. For her dear father's sake
 She'll lend a willing ear. O haste! O haste!
 To loose these bonds.

Olid, (Kneeling and kissing his hand.) Thanks! thanks!
 most royal sir,

I will upon my mission fly at once. *[Exit, O. P.]*

Montezuma. May the Gods speed thee. *(Solus.)* O, if 'tis but
 true

That these base white men 'gainst each other plot;
 Soon with each other they will be at war,
 And my true subjects will have way to act,
 And, with the strongest taking part, my throne,
 From which so rudely I've been thrust away,
 I may resume, and time may give us chance
 These strangers to destroy or drive from hence.

[Enter ESTRADA, P. S.]

Estrada. I have been sent, your majesty, for thee:

Montezuma. Who sent thee?

Estrada. His excellency, Cortez.

Montezuma. For what?

Estrada. I know not. I was but sent to fetch thee,
 And with thee was forbidden to converse,
 Except as strictest duty might require.

Montezuma, (Aside.) O ye Gods, protect me! It is too plain
 From this man's manner, that my doom is fix'd:
 Alas! alas! I go to meet my death;
 There is no mercy in the Spanish heart.

(Aloud.) I attend thee.

Estrada. This way, your majesty.

[Exeunt P. S.]

—o—

SCENE SECOND.

SCENE.—MONTEZUMA'S Garden.—Bowers of vines, rich foliage,
 flowers in vases, &c., &c.—A Lake, with mountains in back-
 ground, and a rivulet flowing into lake.—Enter CORTEZ at-
 tended by HASSAN.—CORTEZ holds a scroll, to which he refers
 occasionally while speaking.

Cortez. This scroll, thou say'st, contains the names of all
Who league against me in this hellish plot ?

Hassan. Of all, your excellency, that I could learn,
In frequent conferences, had of late,
With Don Christoval Olid.

Cortez. By my faith !
It is a lengthy list. Here are some names
Of men of note and noble ancestry,
Whose honorable bearing heretofore,
Had stamp'd thee ever a vile slanderer,
They seem'd so high above suspicion's reach,
But now the facts which thou hast made appear,
And circumstances that attest those facts,
Make certainty too sure.

Hassan. I've told but truth.

Cortez. So Olid, as thou say'st, hath often tried,
To win thee o'er, me to assassinate ?

Hassan. He hath, most noble sir, by many means :
By specious arguments adroitly put,
By promises of safety, rich rewards,
And freedom——

Cortez. Thou layest stress on freedom ;
Deem'st thou then freedom greatest of rewards ?

Hassan. O ! that assured, had well nigh made me false
To thee, myself, and holy Allah too.

Cortez. It may be had more easy than thou think'st.
Is all thou knowest of their secret plans
Related here ?

Hassan. All is set down my lord.

Cortez. O ingrates base ! worse than Iscariots !
Men on whose heads I have heaped honors high,
Riches, and places of the greatest trust ;
Who, while betraying me with shows of love,
With disaffected wretches thus combine,
To foully murder me and share my spoils.
I will their scheme of villainy out-scheme.
On some subordinates I'll seize at first
And wring confession from them, next the chief
I will attain of treason, and the rest—
I know not what—many they are, and strong.
They'd see me safely stow'd away in earth,
And then this mighty empire parcel out,
And my authority and robes of place

They'd gamble for, like the vile heretics
 Who for Christ's clothes cast lots on Calvary.
 The mantle of my power ne'er shall be,
 At chance for traitors, tricksters, and their tools.
 Hassan, thy warning gives me time to thwart
 These schemes infernal, and elude the wiles,
 By which these traitors compass' me about.
 I owe thee favor for thy faithfulness,
 By which I'm saved—how can I thee requite?

Hassan. My soul requites me for my duty done.

Cortez. Forgive, O Hassan! any wrong whate'er
 In hasty mood I may have done to thee;
 My temper quick, oft fiercely flashes forth,
 Like gunpowder ignited by a spark,
 But, once discharged, it bears no after-ill.
 Thy magnanimity I must repay!
 No longer art thou slave to any one,
 Henceforth be free! and O! be still my friend.

[*Embraces him.*]

Hassan. Thy noble gift of liberty I prize
 As doubly dear, joined with thy friendship too.

Cortez. Well dost thou merit both. I now must speed
 This Hydra-headed treason to arrest,
 Ere its quick growth attain a monstrous strength,
 That might defy even a Hercules.
 We will anon confer on thy affairs.
 Still for a short time seem to be my slave.
 Farewell, my friend.

[*Exit, O. P.*]

Hassan. My gen'rous lord, farewell!
 (*Solus, exultingly.*) Once more I'm free! my hands
 unstained with blood!
 My soul's unsoiled; I'm free! I live anew.
 My being's changed. The very air seems changed—
 'Tt greets my nostrils with a purer breath;
 The sky looks brighter and the earth more fair,
 The lake appears deep-blushing to the sun,
 Like a meek maiden at a rake's rude gaze;
 The mountain stream a laughing wanton seems,
 In am'rous sporting with her bushy banks.
 Valley and hill in gayest guise look clad,
 As if to join a general holiday.
 Flowers a richer perfume seem to yield,
 And birds to carol more melodiously.

All things appear more gladsome than their wont,
 All nature seems to wear her sweetest smiles,
 And all the world looks happy, joyous, free!

O! holy liberty—all hail! all hail! [*Exit, O. P.*

[*Enter NINNAH and OLID, in conversation, P. S.*

Ninnah. I've heard the women of thy home are fair,
 And skilled in rare accomplishments and arts.
 Methinks on one of them thy choice should fall.
 Rather than on a simple stranger maid,
 How could untutored Ninnah e'er expect
 To soothe thee with those songs of melody
 In which the ladies of thy land delight?

Olid. O! gentle Ninnah, rich as is my land,
 In lovely women, yet are none like thee—
 So rich in maiden graces and in heart;
 None who could ever charm me as thou hast.
 Their arts and blandishments could never move
 Like thy meek innocence, and all their songs
 Could never with such rapture fill my soul
 As the soft melody of thy sweet voice.
 Thou hast thy father's sanction and his wish;
 O! be my bride, and I will be thy slave.

Ninnah. My father's wish is ever Ninnah's law;
 But tell me, sir, can nought but my poor hand
 Purchase thy service for my prisoned sire?

Olid. O! Princely lady, deem me not so mean,
 To set a price on thy most precious self.
 But all my aid, for love I give thy father,
 And from thy grateful love I hope return.

Ninnah. A young coy maiden is not won at once.
 Let me consult the priestess of our house.
 And, noble stranger, meanwhile feed on hope—
 They say it is true lovers' choicest food.
 I must within, so fare thee well.

Olid, (bowing and kissing her hand, which she extends.) Fare-
 well.

[*Exit NINNAH.*

O yes! my simple one, I'll feed on hope,
 But prouder hope than merely hope of thee.

[*Exit, P. S.*

SCENE THIRD.

SCENE.—*Throne-room in MONTEZUMA'S Palace.—CORTEZ on the throne.—All the Spaniards (except OLID and LUGO) arranged on the right of them.—The Mexicans (except MONTEZUMA) on the left.*

Cortez. Where is the prisoner for whom I sent?

Alvarado. He waits your pleasure in the ante-room,
In old Estrada's custody.

Cortez. Good sir,

Be pleased to have him hither shown at once.

[*ALVARADO bows, and exit.*]

My friends, 't now behoves us much to act
With utmost circumspection and good faith,
Towards each other, and to our allies;
But most of all towards the Mexicans,
That we may win their confidence and love.

[*Enter MONTEZUMA, guarded by ESTRADA, and attended by ALVARADO.—He starts at seeing CORTEZ on the throne.*]

How fares Montezuma?

Montezuma. O! Ma-la-che,

Swift as sweet streams that to Tuscuco flow,
Mine eyes teem bitter tears that cannot ebb—
I weep my country's wrongs.

Cortez. Weep for thy crimes!

It is profanity to name as wrongs,
The retributions and just punishment,
Decreed by Heaven for thy many sins.
As was foretold by Nature's plainest signs,
And by their prophecies and omens dire,
Revealed thee by thy Gods, in all else false,
But true in their predictions of thy fate.

Montezuma. Alas! alas! that to me and my house
The dreaded visitation should befall!
Methought the sad accomplishment might be
Delayed for generations yet to come.

Cortez. I, the instrument of its fulfilment,
By Heaven's will shall rigid justice smooth
And temper with sweet mercy as I may.

Montezuma. Thou! the Spanish chief, speakest of mercy!
Thou dost but speak it.

Cortez. I will act it, too.

Take off his chains.

[*ESTRADA removes the chains from MONTEZUMA, and CORTEZ descends the throne, and leads MONTEZUMA by the hand to the seat, and then descends backwards.*

Thou art at liberty!

Resume again thy sov'reignty and state,
Receive our humble homage. Let us be
Thy faithful subjects, servitors and friends.

[*CORTEZ and the Spaniards all kneel on one knee, The Mexicans bow low their heads with their open hands raised near their ears.—All repeat after CORTEZ:*

Hail! all hail! imperial Montezuma.

Montezuma. Ye surely cannot mean to mock me thus.

I am amazed!

Cortez. All is reality.

Lose not thyself in wonder. 'Tis a rule
Of Christian faith ('tis Christian practice, too,)
To forgive our enemies. August sire,
I meekly crave that thou wilt lightly judge
My most unwilling trespasses on thee.
I serve a power greater than myself,
And but obey while seeming to command.
Pardon me.

Montezuma. Pardon thee—O! Ma-la-che,

Henceforth as brothers, twins, be thou and I.

[*As he speaks, he descends the throne and embraces CORTEZ.*

Cortez. So may we ever be. My royal liege
Thy subjects congregate around the walls,
All eager their lov'd monarch to salute.
I pray thee don thy royal robes again;
And graciously receive and speak to them.

Montezuma. I will.

[*Exit L. H., attended by Mexicans in order.—The Spaniards exeunt R. H. in file, except CORTEZ and ALVARADO, who as the rest go off move down front.*

Alvarado. Your excellency, what means this,
I'm not less amaz'd than Montezuma,
I never dream'd the game you meant to play.

Cortez. It is an old histr'onic game, good friend,
Soldier-craft versus king-craft. nothing more.

I've taught a lesson to his vanity,
 And shown example of my powers too;
 Both will well serve us. We must yet awhile
 Amuse him with the empty show of state,
 Appearing still submissive to his will,
 And while we help his pageantry and pomp,
 He, like a puppet, shall enact such part
 As suits us showmen to display him in.

Alvarado. I' faith, I like thy policy full well.

He'll be the shadow and the substance thou.

"The power behind the throne"—thou know'st the saw.

Cortez. "Is sometimes greater than the throne itself."

Mighty empires are often govern'd so.

Come let us forth to see the clam'rous crowd,

Receive their un-king'd king, re-king'd anew.

Alcarado. I attend thee.

[*Exeunt O. P.*]

—o—

SCENE FOURTH.

SCENE.—*A Street in the city of Mexico.—Enter OLID, O. P., and LUGO, P. S., meeting.*

Olid. Well met. Lugo, I was in quest of thee.

Lugo. And I of thee.

Olid. Why, hast thou any news?

Lugo. Cortez has Montezuma re-enthron'd
 And paid him homage. Even now the king
 Ascends the outer palace wall, 'neath which
 His people gather in vast multitudes
 To greet him in his royalty restor'd.

Olid. O hellish news! what can this Cortez mean?

'Twas but awhile ago I left the king
 Chain'd and in prison, sunk in deep despair,
 Yet to my overtures he gave good ear,
 And my requests all granted, and behold?
 I wear his power with his signet here.

Lugo. Alas! I fear me it is gained too late.

Olid. We must not think so. It is time to act.

Cortez no doubt has some deep scheme in view
 That bodes us evil. We must frustrate it.

If he with Montezuma doth conjoin,
They may united work us greatest harm.
On vacillating Hassan I'll prevail
To quickly do the deed, else all is lost.
I pray thee see our friends, and bid them all
Meet forthwith at my quarters to consult.

Lugo. I will about it instantly.

[*Exit O. P.*

Olid.

Make speed.

(*Solus.*) The crisis of my life approaches now,
This Cortez I'll supplant or perish else,
And he shall perish or I'll lose my aim.
I've pass'd the Rubicon 'twixt fate and me;
I will be either regal here or nought.
If I should fail—I'd meet a traitor's doom:
But I'll not think it, 'tis a coward thought.
If I should win—still they'll term me traitor;
O loathsome word to couple with one's name.
Well let them call me traitor if they will,
E'en that name, success will gild with glory;
For fame, however won, will still be fame.
The name of Cataline immortal lives,
In the same annals that of Cato tell,
And since the waves of ages have rolled by,
Who can identify the man and name
One with the other? why, what boots it then
If fame be won by evil or by good?
Better is immortality of ill,
Than the cold void of dark oblivion.
Methinks that it were nobler far to die
With the just maledictions of mankind,
Through countless ages heap'd upon my name,
Than sink to death as vulgar mortals do,
With canting churchmen and sad-seeming friends,
Hymning dull dirges o'er my rotting bones;
And have my mem'ry no longer live,
When those who knew me shall have left the world,
O I could die incarnadin'd in crime,
Nor deem my fame one single jot the worse,
Though damn'd, so 'twere immortally accurs'd.

[*Exit P. S.*

SCENE FIFTH.

SCENE.—*The outer wall of MONTEZUMA's Palace.*—MONTEZUMA ascends the parapet in robes of state, attended by TEUTILÉ, HIGH PRIEST, NINNAH, and a retinue of Nobles, with banners and arms of Mexico displayed.—The Spaniards (except OLID) arrange themselves in upper angle, with banners of Spain.—A large concourse of Mexicans at foot of the wall, who greet MONTEZUMA's appearance with shouts of "Hail! all hail! imperial Montezuma."

Montezuma. Most loving nobles, faithful subjects, friends!

The heart of Montezuma is made glad.

We to our wonted power are restored,

And on the morrow will resume our court,

And greet the rev'rend priesthood of our Gods,

And hold grand council with the chiefs of state.

We have in holy brotherhood embraced

The good and powerful chief Ma-la-che,

Who, with his band of brave white warriors,

Will henceforth be our firm and true allies,

And equal sharers.

[*Tamult here occurs among the Mexicans, and cries of "Shame! shame!" and a flight of arrows is discharged at MONTEZUMA, and he falls back into the arms of TEUTILE and HIGH PRIEST, and dies.*

Priest. The Gods protect us!

Teutilé. How is it with your sacred majesty?

Ah me! he's dead.

Cortez. The king—the king is slain?

Charge! charge! ye Spaniards on the regicides!

[*Draws his sword, and assails the nearest Mexican, who receives the blow on his shield.—The Spaniards discharge their carbines, and rush upon the Mexicans, who are driven off, as the scene closes.*

SCENE SIXTH.

SCENE.—*Short Street in Mexico.*—Enter OLID and LUGO.

Lugo. I've seen thy friends, and they will join us all.

After the duties of the day are done.

The king's demise may greatly change our plans.
 But tell me, Olid, why is this command
 By Cortez given that we all should meet
 In the great square to-day? I fear me much
 It hath some bearing upon us.

Olid.

Not so;

For Cortez doth not in the least suspect.
 Why he hath named me on a special watch,
 Near to himself to-night. Hassan, besides,
 Hath given me assurance positive,
 Couch'd in figurative Moorish style,
 That e'er the dawn both you and I may rest,
 As if Azrael fann'd us with his wings,
 And he could swear that Cortez would not live
 To entertain the slightest doubt of us.
 The death of Montezuma must have made
 Great changes necessary in the State;
 And were conven'd to hear them now proclaim'd,
 Nothing more, believe me.

Lugo.

It may be so,

And so I trust it is; but much I dread
 Some awful evil, and my mind is filled
 With dark forebodings.

Olid.

Banish, banish them!

Lugo. Would that I could—but now 'tis ample time
 To join our comrades.

Olid.

Let us start at once.

Be stout of heart for all goes bravely on.

[*Exeunt together, O. P.*]

SCENE SEVENTH.

SCENE.—*The Great Square in the city of Mexico.—Temple and Imperial Palace in the back-ground.—Sacrificial stone in the centre.—All the Spaniards (except CORTÉZ) enter and arrauge in order on the right of the stage, with OLMEDO, ALVARADO, SANDOVAL, LUGO and OLID in front of them, ANTONIO and MARIA on the left of OLID, and MARINA on her left, and HASSAN just behind MARINA.—The Mexicans all enter at the same time, and form on the left of the stage, TEUTILE and the HIGH PRIEST in front, and NINNAH on the right of the Priest. Each party has*

its peculiar arms, banners, &c. Music played from the commencement of the scene until the parties have formed.

Alvarado, (Aside to Sandoval.) Prithee, can'st tell me why is this parade.

Sandoval. I do not know, and am surprised at it.
I marked the order was peremptory,
And given too, more sternly than is wont.
What do'st thou think?

Alvarado. I cannot guess the cause.
Cortez, of late, hath grown reserv'd and cold;
I've notic'd him exceeding ill at ease,
As if great grief were heavy at his heart;
The emp'ror's death doubtless affects his schemes,
But something weightier, than merely that
Must press him now. But soon we'll truly know
What all this means; for, look ye, where he comes
Frowning as night.

[Enter CORTEZ, O. P., with sote-mn step.—He advances a few paces and surveys the assemblage, before speaking.]

Cortez. Captains and cavaliers!
And ye, our new-made friends of Mexico,
We all most deeply our great loss deplore,
In Montezuma, suddenly cut off,
Just in the very germing of our hopes,
When by fraternal union with king Charles,
The two great empires of the world combin'd,
Might all the rest keep in submissive awe.
Brave Mexicans! ye saw your late good king
Descend his august throne and me embrace
By the dear name of brother, such to him
I would have prov'd, in faith, and truth, and love.
His corse imperial, with solemn pomp,
And all befitting rites and obsequies,
Pertaining to his rank illustrious
And his immortal name, shall be enshrined
In sepulchre with his great ancestors:
And Montezuma's legal heritor
Shall with due pomp in proper time be crown'd.
Castilians! countrymen! it still hath been
Ever my foremost wish, my dearest pride,
Next to my loyal duty to our king,
Your int'rests and your glory to promote.

And beyond measure I am pain'd to know
That disaffection lurks within your ranks,
And treason now corrodes the hearts of some,
Who by assassination seek my life.

[He suddenly ascends the sacrificial stone.]

Come, all ye disaffected ingrates come!
Here, on this bloody stone of sacrifice—
A fitting stage for your dread drama—here
Immolate me, your chief; a victim meet
For offering to your infernal gods
Of envy, avarice, and ambition!
Worse than the deities we here deposed.
Come! in my willing bosom sheathe your swords.

Alvarado. We have no traitors here—none!

Lugo, Sandoval, and Olid, (Altogether.) None! none! none!

Cortez. Ye have! ye have! Here is the damning list,

[Produces a paper.]

With ev'ry name set down, and duly prov'd
By proofs undoubted, irrefragible:
But I'll not read it, let the names be lost,

[Tears the paper.]

And I'll forget them all, save only one.
I do accuse thee, Christoval de Olid,
Of high treason—

Olid. (Advancing a pace or two.) The charge is basely
false,

Ay, as false as the foul heart that forg'd it.

Cortez. Thou hast conspir'd against thy sov'reign's rule,
And 'gainst my life—his representative.
I have the evidence—seize him soldiers!

*[ESTRADA and others spring towards OLID, who
draws his sword, and moving front, exclaims—]*

Olid. O coward! bid thy myrmidons rush on
To a brave act thou never dar'st attempt.

Cortez. Back, to your places! I'll alone at him.

[Draws his sword and springs from the stone.]

Vile traitor, I defy thee—here's my shield,
Strong as the ægis that Minerva bore—
The gift of mighty Jupiter—my sword
Sharp as the scimitar of Saladin,
In thy foul breast I'll find a sheath for it.

Olid. As for my shield I reck not of its use,

[Throws it away.]

My blade is of the true Toledo make;
 If that its edge be not so keen as thine,
 I'll whet it on thy stony heart, base dog!

[As they cross swords MARIA rushes down and interposes her shield between them.]

Maria. Hold, madmen, hold! ye know not what ye do!
 O Christoval! Cortez! ye know me not,
 I am Amma de Olid, O Cortez!
 That same Amma, whom from Salamanca,
 From a convent's holy walls, years ago,
 Thou did'st seduce; and left me with my babe
 To want and woe. I fled in rude disguise
 And married with an honest common man,
 But a brave soldier, and we rear'd thy boy.
 Time and deep sorrow wrought such change in me,
 That all unknown I've followed in these wars,
 Scarce knowing why, unless that I might be
 Near to my brother and my darling child.
 Behold, O Cortez! in thy page, thy son.

Antonio, (Starts a step forward with clasped hands.)

My father! O my father!

Maria, (To Olid.) My brother. Christoval! brother!
 I am thy sister.

Olid. Woman, away! Thou dost profane that name.

Cortez. No more! take hence this prating, frantic wretch.
[ESTRADA and another seize MARIA, who struggles with them as they bear her back.]

Olid. Now is mine arm nerv'd stronger than before.
 Come on, thou villain!

Cortez. Have at thee, traitor!
[They fight.—CORTEZ stabs OLID, who falls exclaiming—]

Olid. I set life, glory, all upon a cast,
 And all are lost.

Cortez. Well hast thou met thy fate.

[MARIA breaks from the soldiers, shrieks, and rushes down to OLID, and kneels at his head.]

Maria. Speak! O dear brother! Speak! O speak to me!
 Say you forgive; in mercy, O forgive!

[OLID slightly raises, and stretches out his hand, which she clasps.—He falls back and dies.—Enter two Messengers, O. P.]

1st Messenger. Don Fernando Cortez, we have made speed
 Hither from Spain, bearing the king's command

For thy recall, and early as may be,
Appearance at his court.

Cortez. What may this mean? *(In great surprise.)*

1st Messenger. Thou art charg'd with many grave offenses—

With usurpation of authority,

And divers other serious misdeeds:

All which are nam'd in the king's warrant here,

Signed by imperial Charles with his own hand.

[Hands paper to CORTEZ, who opens and examines it closely.]

Cortez. The king's own autograph: I know it well.

O Charles! O Charles! I mapp'd this world anew,

And for thy portion mark'd upon the chart,

Countries so vast and empires so outspread;

So rich in clime, and fruits, and gems, and gold,

Compar'd to them thy lineal heritage,

Is as a patch unseemly on thy robe.

And for such gifts thou giv'st me disgrace.

I might have rul'd here with imperial sway,

My heirs succeeding through succeeding time,

And now my power is a pageant past.

O sage most wise of old! most wise thy say

"Put not thy trust in princes," O fool! fool!

Mine enemies have triumphed with the king,

And state and reverence now are lost to me—

Yet shall the name of the Great Conqueror,

Fernando Cortez, be rever'd of men,

And live as long as last the lands he won.

Bless thee, my boy!

[He extends his hand to ANTONIO, who seizes it, kneels, and kisses it, and remains kneeling until curtain falls.—CORTEZ turns and looks to MARINA, who rushes forward and throws herself into his arms.—They embrace in silence.]

Hassan, attend me, friend.

Farewell to all. 'Tis fate—lead on—lead on.

HASSAN bows as CORTEZ addresses him—MARINA remains with her hands clasped over her forehead, looking (upwards) after him, as he goes out preceded by Messengers, and attended by HASSAN.—Curtain falls to slow music.

—oo—

END OF ACT V.

NOTES TO CORTEZ, THE CONQUEROR.

ACT I.—SCENE 2.

Nor the wise heathen's¹ teachings of sad doubt.

¹Plato.

ACT III.—SCENE 2.

These warriors strange are clad in substance hard,—²

²The Mexicans were unacquainted with iron or steel. There were no horses on this continent until the Spaniards introduced them.

ACT III.—SCENE 4.

To revel in the halls

Of the Montezumas!³

³This toast of Alvarado is an anachronism. The words were uttered on a memorable occasion, by the hero of San Jacinto, Gen. SAM HOUSTON, through whom a "bright particular star" was added to the glorious galaxy of our Union, and who, in a spirit of prophesy, foretold and pointed the path of our countrymen to "the Halls of the Montezumas."^{*}

The motto on the Spanish flag was, "Let us follow the true cross, for in this sign we shall conquer."

The dresses are described in Clavigero, Prescott and Bernal Diaz. Alvarado describes them also in a speech to Sandoval.

R. H. means right hand—L. H. left hand—P. S. prompt side—O. P. opposite prompt—C. centre.

*Since the above was in type, I inquired of Gen. Houston on what occasion it was that he uttered the above words. He said I might indeed say it was a memorable occasion "for they were first uttered by him at a hotel in Washington, some years ago, when himself and the great Booth were on a frolic together. Booth was quoting Shakspeare, and he was making a speech to an imaginary army."
AUTHOR.

ERRATA.

This play was set up from the original MS. and some errors have unavoidably occurred. Among the greater are the following. In Teutile's description of the Spaniards, a line is omitted; it should read—

They kill the tiny sparrow on the wing,
And they can bring the mountain condor down,
Ev'n when his flight is highest, &c.

On the 63d page the ninth and tenth lines from the bottom should read—

All my aid for love I give thy father;
And all my hope is grateful love from thee.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—To Col. ALBERT PIKE, the popular poet of Arkansas, I am indebted for many suggestions and corrections which his high poetic taste and critical judgment discovered and made. I am also indebted to him for kindly aiding in the publication.

AUTHOR.

ALCANTARA

—

ALCANTARA is a synthetic material that is made from a combination of cotton and polyester. It is known for its soft, plush texture and is often used in the manufacture of upholstery, clothing, and bedding. The material is also known for its durability and resistance to wear and tear. It is a popular choice for many people who are looking for a comfortable and long-lasting material for their home or wardrobe.

ALCANTARA is a synthetic material that is made from a combination of cotton and polyester. It is known for its soft, plush texture and is often used in the manufacture of upholstery, clothing, and bedding. The material is also known for its durability and resistance to wear and tear. It is a popular choice for many people who are looking for a comfortable and long-lasting material for their home or wardrobe.

Binder
Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

